

ANNOTATIONS

BY

SAM. JOHNSON & GEO. STEEVENS,

AND

THE VARIOUS COMMENTATORS,

UPON

MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM,

WRITTEN BY

WILL. SHAKSPEARE.

—SIC ITUR AD ASTRA.

VIRG.

LONDON:

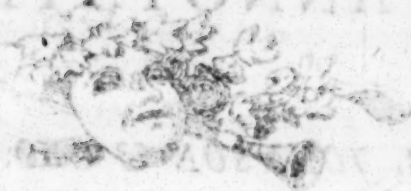
Printed for, and under the Direction of,

JOHN BELL, British-Library, STRAND,

Bookseller to His Royal Highness the PRINCE of WALES.

M DCC LXXXVII.

ANNOTATIONS



THE FLOUS COMMENTATORS

HODGKINER MONT. DREAM

WELLESLEY

WILL. SHAKSPEARE.

M

Lin

rev

boo

No

aut

La

the

toy

thi



ANNOTATIONS

UPON

MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM.

ACT I.

Line 6. *LONG* WITHERING OUT a young man's revenue.] So, in Chapman's Translation of the 4th book of *Homer* :

“—there the goodly plant lies *withering* out his grace.” STEEVENS.

10. *New bent in heaven*,—] The old copies read—*Now bent*.—Mr. Rowe made the change. MALONE.

28. —*witch'd*—] The old copies read *bewitch'd*. JOHNSON.

34. —*gawds*—] *i. e.* baubles, toys, trifles. Our author has the word frequently. The Rev. Mr. Lambe, in his notes on the ancient metrical history of the *Battle of Flodden*, observes, that a *gawd* is a child's toy, and that the children in the North call their play-things *gowdys*, and their baby-house a *gowdy-house*.

STEEVENS.

45. *Or to her death: according to our law,]* By a law of Solon's, parents had an absolute power of life and death over their children. *[So it suited the poet's purpose well enough, to suppose the Athenians had it before. Or, perhaps, he neither thought nor knew any thing of the matter.* WARBURTON.

67. *—to die the death—]* See note on *Measure for Measure*, act ii. line 739. STEEVENS.

70. *Know of your youth,—]* Bring your youth to the question. Consider your youth. JOHNSON.

73. *[For aye—]* i. e. for ever. STEEVENS.

78. *But earthlier happy is the rose distill'd,]* Thus all the copies: yet *earthlier* is so harsh a word, and *earthlier happy*, for *happier earthly*, a mode of speech so unusual, that I wonder none of the editors have proposed *earlier happy*. JOHNSON.

It has since been observed, that Mr. Pope did propose *earlier*. We might read, *earthly happier*.

808—X. 8. STEEVENS.

This is a thought in which Shakspeare seems to have much delighted. We meet with it more than once in his Sonnets. See 5th, 6th, and 54th Sonnets.

82. *—to whose unwish'd yoke]* MALONE.

83. *—to whose unwish'd yoke]* Thus the modern editors: the particle *to* is wanting in the old copies.

85. *—to whose unwish'd yoke]* STEEVENS.

96. *You have her father's love, Demetrius;*

Let me have Hermia's: do you marry him.] I suspect that Shakspeare wrote:

“ Let

"Let me have *Hermit*; do you marry him."

TYRWHITT.

112. ~~As spotted is~~ As *spotless* is innocent, so *spotted* is wicked. JOHNSON.

133. *Beteem them*—] Give them, bestow upon them. The word is used by Spenser:

"So would I, said th' enchanter, glad and fain

"*Beteem* to you his sword, you to defend."

Fairy Queen.

JOHNSON.

Again, in *The Case is Altered*. How? Ask *Dalio* and *Milo*, 1605:

"I could *beteeme* her a better match."

But I rather think that to *beteem* in this place signifies (as in the northern counties) to *pour out*; from *tommer*, Danish. STEEVENS.

136. *The course of true love, &c.*] This passage seems to have been imitated by Milton.

Paradise Lost, B. X.—896.

MALONE.

145. The old editions read *momentany*, which is the old and proper word. The modern editors, *momentary*. JOHNSON.

The first folio has not *momentany* but *momentary*.

MALONE.

"—that short, *momentary* rage"— is an expression of Dryden. HENLEY.

147. *Brief as the lightning in the colly'd night,*
That, in a speech, unfolds both heaven and
earth,

B

And

*And ere a man hath power to say,—Behold!
The jaws of darkness do devour it up:]* Though the word *spleen* be here employed oddly enough, yet I believe it right. Shakspeare, always hurried on by the grandeur and multitude of his ideas, assumes every now and then, an uncommon licence in the use of his words. Particularly in complex moral modes it is usual with him to employ one, only to express a very few *ideas* of that number of which it is composed. Thus wanting here to express the ideas—of a sudden, or—in a trice, he uses the word *spleen*; which, partially considered, signifying a hasty sudden fit, is enough for him, and he never troubles himself about the further or fuller signification of the word. Here, he uses the word *spleen* for a *sudden hasty fit*; so just the contrary, in the *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, he uses *sudden* for *splenetick*—*sudden quips*. And it must be owned this sort of conversation adds a force to the diction.

WARBURTON.

Brief as the lightning in the colly'd night,] *colly'd*, i. e. black, smutted with coal, a word still used in the midland counties.

So, in Ben Jonson's *Poetaster*:

“—Thou hast not *collied* thy face enough.”

STEEVENS.

159. *I have a widow aunt, &c.]* These lines perhaps might more properly be regulated thus:

I have a widow aunt, a dowager

Of great revenue, and she hath no child,

And she respects me as her only son;

Her house from Athens is remov'd seven leagues,

There, gentle Hermia, may I marry thee,

And to that place—— JOHNSON.

161. —remote—] *Remote* is the reading of both the quartos. STEEVENS.

Remov'd, which is the reading of the folio, was, I believe, the author's word.—He uses it again in *Hamlet*, for *remote* :

“He wafts you to a more removed ground.”

MALONE.

176. —by that fire which burn'd the Carthage queen,] Shakspeare had forgot that Theseus performed his exploits before the Trojan war, and consequently long before the death of Dido. STEEVENS.

186. *Your eyes are lode-stars*;——] This was a compliment not unfrequent among the old poets. The lode-star is the leading or guiding star, that is, the pole-star. The magnet is, for the same reason, called the lode-stone, either because it leads iron, or because it guides the sailor. Milton has the same thought in *L'Allegro* :

“Tow'rs and battlements he sees

“Bosom'd high in tufted trees,

“Where perhaps some beauty lies,

“The cynosure of neighb'ring eyes.”

JOHNSON.

189. —O, were favour to!] *Favour*, is *feature*, countenance. So, in *Twelfth Night* :

“——thine eye

“Hath stay'd upon some favour that it loves.”

Bij

STEEVENS.

190.

190. This emendation is taken from the Oxford edition. The old reading is, *Your words I catch*.

JOHNSON.

194. —*to be to you translated*.] *To translate*, in our author, sometimes signifies *to change*, *to transform*. So, in *Timon*:

“ ———— to present slaves and servants

Translates his rivals.” ———— STEEVENS,

203. His folly, Helena, is *no fault* of mine.] The folio and one of the quartos read, *His folly, Helena, is none of mine*.

JOHNSON.

204. *None, but your beauty; would that fault were mine!*] I would point this line thus:

None. — But your beauty; — Would that fault were mine!

HENDERSON.

207. Perhaps every reader may not discover the propriety of these lines. *Hermia* is willing to comfort *Helena*, and to avoid all appearance of triumph over her. She therefore bids her not to consider the power of pleasing, as an advantage to be much envied or much desired, since *Hermia*, whom she considers as possessing it in the supreme degree, has found no other effect in it than the loss of happiness.

JOHNSON.

219. *Emptying our bosoms of their counsels swell'd;
There my Lysander and myself shall meet;
And thence, from Athens, turn away our eyes,
To seek new friends and strange companions.*]

This whole scene is strictly in rhyme; and that it deviates in these two couplets, I am persuaded, is

owing

owing to the ignorance of the first, and the inaccuracy of the later editors: I have therefore ventured to restore the rhimes, as I make no doubt but the poet first gave them. *Swell* was easily corrupted into *swell'd*; because that made an antithesis to *emptying*: and *strange companions* our editors thought was plain English; but *stranger companies*, a little quaint and unintelligible. Our author very often uses the substantive, *Stranger*, adjectively; and *companies* to signify companions: as *Richard II.*

“To tread the stranger paths of banishment.”

And *Henry V.*

“His companies unlettered, rude, and shallow.”

THEOBALD.

Dr. Warburton retains the old reading, and, perhaps justifiably: for a *bosom swell'd with secrets* does not appear as an expression unlikely to have been used by our author, who speaks of a *stuff'd bosom* in *Macbeth*.

In Lylly's *Midas*, 1592, is a somewhat similar expression: “I am one of those whose tongues are *swell'd with silence*.” Again, in our author's *King Richard II.*

“——the unseen grief

“That swells in silence in the tortured soul.”

In the scenes of *K. Richard II.* there is likewise a mixture of rhyme and blank verse. I have therefore restored the old reading,—*strange companions*. Mr. Tyrwhitt concurs with Theobald.

STEEVENS.

Bijj

I think,

I think, *sweet*, the reading proposed by Theobald, is right.

Counsels relates in construction to *emptying*—and not to the last word in the line, as it is now made to do by reading *swell'd*. A similar phraseology is used by a writer contemporary with Shakspeare.

"So ran the poor girls filling the air with shrieks,

"Emptying of all the colour their pale cheeks."

Heywood's *Apology for Actors*, Sig. B. 4. 1610.

The adjective *all* here added to *colour*, exactly answers, in construction, to *sweet* in the text, as regulated by Theobald.

MALONE.

226. ———when *Phæbe* doth behold, &c.

—————*deep midnight*.] Shakspeare has a little forgotten himself. It appears from act i. line 7, that to-morrow night would be within three nights of the new moon, when there is no moonshine at all, much less at deep midnight. The same oversight occurs in act ii.

BLACKSTONE.

235. ———no quantity.] *Quality* seems a word more suitable to the sense than quantity, but either may serve.

JOHNSON.

245. ———in game——] *Game* here signifies not contentious play, but *sport, jest*. So, Spenser :

"—'twixt earnest, and 'twixt game." JOHNSON.

245. ———*Hermia's eyne*,] This plural is common both in Chaucer and Spenser. So, in Chaucer's *Character of the Prioress*, late edit. v. 152.

"——hir eyen grey as glas."

Again,

Again, in Spenser's *Fairy Queen*, B. I. c. 4, st. 19.

"While flashing beams do dare his feeble ~~eyes~~."

— *gawdies of nonbitanoc ni zis* STEEVENS.

247. — *this hail* —] Thus all the editions, except the quarto, 1600, printed by Roberts, which reads instead of *this hail*, *his hail*. STEEVENS.

255. — *the bellows-mender*,] In Ben Jonson's masque of *Pan's Anniversary*, &c. a man of the same profession is introduced. I have been told that a *bellows-mender* was one who had the care of organs, regals, &c. STEEVENS.

255. In this scene Shakspeare takes advantage of his knowledge of the theatre, to ridicule the prejudices and competitions of the players. Bottom, who is generally acknowledged the principal actor, declares his intention to be for a tyrant, for a part of fury, tumult, and noise, such as every young man pants to perform when he first steps upon the stage. The same Bottom, who seems bred in a tiring-room, has another histrionical passion. He is for engrossing every part, and would exclude his inferiors from all possibility of distinction. He is therefore desirous to play Pyramus, Thisbe, and the Lyon at the same time. JOHNSON.

257. — *the scrip*.] A scrip, Fr. *escript*, now written *écrit*.

So, Chaucer, in *Troilus and Cressida*, L. II. 1130,

"Scripe nor bil."

Again, in Heywood's, *If you know not me, you know Nobody*, 1633, Part II.

"I'll

"I'll take thy own word without *scrip* or scroll."

Holinshed likewise uses the word. STEEVENS.

264. —grow to a point.] I meet with the same kind of expression in *Wily Beguiled*:

"As yet we are grown to no conclusion."

Again, in *The Arraignment of Paris*, 1584:

"Our reasons will be infinite, I trow,

"Unless unto some other point we grow."

—and so grow to a point.] The first folio reads:

—and so grow on to a point. MALONE.

265. —*The most lamentable comedy, &c.*] This is very probably a burlesque on the title-page of *Cambyses*:

"A lamentable Tragedie, mixed full of pleasant Mirth, containing, *The Life of Cambises King of Percia*," &c. By Tho. Preston, bl. let. no date.

On the registers of the Stationers-Company however appears, "the booke of *Perymus and Thesbye*," 1562. Perhaps Shakspeare copied some part of his interlude from it.

STEEVENS.

268. *A very good piece of work—and a merry.*]

This is designed as a ridicule on the titles of our ancient moralities and interludes. Thus Skelton's *Magnificence* is called "a goodly interlude and a mery."

STEEVENS.

283. —*I will condole in some measure.*] When we use this verb at present we put *with* before the person for whose misfortune we profess concern. Anciently it seems to have been employed without it. So, in *A Pennyworth of good Counsell*, an ancient ballad:

"Thus

"Thus to the wall

"I may condole."

Again, in the *Three Merry Coblers*, another old song :

"Poore weather beaten soles,

"Whose case the body condoles." STEEVENS.

285. —[*I could play Ercles rarely, or a part to tear a cat in,*—] In the old comedy of the *Roaring Girl*, 1611, there is a character called *Tear-cat*, who says; "I am called, by those who have seen my valour, *Tear-cat*." In an anonymous piece called *Histriomastix*, or *The Player Whipt*, 1610, in six acts, a parcel of soldiers drag a company of players on the stage, and the captain says: "Sirrah, this is you that would rend and *tear a cat* upon a stage," &c. Again, in *The Isle of Gulls*, a comedy by J. Day, 1606: "I had rather hear two such jests, than a whole play of such *Tear-cat* thunder-claps." STEEVENS.

286. —[to make all split.] This is to be connected with the previous part of the speech; not with the subsequent rhymes. It was the description of a bully. In the second act of the *Scornful Lady*, we meet with "two *roaring boys* of Rome, that *made all split*."

FARMER.

I meet with the same expression in the *Widow's Tears*, by Chapman, 1612: "Her wit I must employ upon this business to prepare my next encounter, but in such a fashion as shall *make all split*." MALONE.

288. and *shivering shocks*,] Dr. Farmer rightly wished to read *with*. STEEVENS.

306. —as small, &c.] This passage shews how the want of women on the old stage was supplied. If they had not a young man who could perform the part with a face that might pass for feminine, the character was acted in a mask, which was at that time a part of a lady's dress so much in use that it did not give any unusual appearance to the scene: and he that could modulate his voice in a female tone might play the woman very successfully. It is observed in Downes's *Roscius Anglicanus*, that Kynaston, one of these counterfeit heroines, moved the passions more strongly than the women that have since been brought upon the stage. Some of the catastrophes of the old comedies, which make lovers marry the wrong women, are by recollection of the common use of masks, brought nearer to probability. JOHNSON.

Prynne, in his *Histriomastix*, exclaims with great vehemence through several pages, because a woman acted a part in a play at Black-Friars in the year 1628.

STEEVENS.

316. —you must play *Thisby's* mother.] There seems a double forgetfulness of our poet, in relation to the characters of this interlude. The father and mother of *Thisby*, and the father of *Pyramus*, are here mentioned, who do not appear at all in the interlude; but *Wall* and *Moonshine* are both employed in it, of whom there is not the least notice taken here.

THEOBALD.

Theobald is wrong as to this last particular. The introduction of *Wall* and *Moonshine* was an after-thought.

thought. See act iii. sc. 1. It may be observed, however, that no part of what is rehearsed is afterwards repeated, when the piece is acted before Theatres.

STEEVENS.

321. ———there is a play fitted.] Both the quartos read *here*.

STEEVENS.

323. ———slow of study.] *Study* is still the cant term used in a theatre for getting any nonsense by rote. Hamlet asks the player if he can "*study*" a speech.

STEEVENS.

337. ———you] Omitted in the first folio. MALONE.

351. ———your perfect yellow.] Here Bottom again discovers a true genius for the stage by his solicitude for propriety of dress, and his deliberation which beard to choose among many beards, all unnatural.

JOHNSON.

This custom of wearing coloured beards, the reader will find more amply explained in *Measure for Measure*, act iv. line 267.

STEEVENS.

352. ———French crowns, &c.] See *Measure for Measure*, act i. line 140.

STEEVENS.

360. ———properties,——] *Properties* are whatever little articles are wanted in a play for the actors, according to their respective parts, dresses and scenes excepted. The person who delivers them out is, to this day, called the *property-man*.

So, in *Albumazar*, 1610 :

"Furbo, our peards,

"Black patches for our eyes, and other *properties*."

Again,

Again, in *Westward-Hoe*, 1606: "I'll go make ready my rustical properties."

STEEVENS.

365. *At the dukes oak we meet—hold, or cut bow-strings.*] This proverbial phrase came originally from the camp. When a rendezvous was appointed, the militia soldiers would frequently make excuse for not keeping word, that their *bowstrings* were *broke*, i. e. their arms unserviceable. Hence, when one would give another absolute assurance of meeting him, he would say proverbially—*hold, or cut bow-strings*—i. e. whether the bow-strings held or broke. For *cut* is used as a neuter, like the verb *frets*. As when we say, the *string frets*, the *silk frets*; for the passive, it is *cut* or *fretted*.

WARBURTON.

This interpretation is very ingenious, but somewhat disputable. The excuse made by the militia soldiers is a mere supposition, without proof; and it is well known that while *bows* were in use, no archer ever entered the field without a supply of *strings* in his pocket; whence originated the proverb, *to have two strings to one's bow*. In *The Country Girl*, a comedy by T. B., 1647, is the following threat to a fiddler:

"—fiddler, strike,
"I'll strike you, else, and cut your begging bow-strings."

So, in *The Ball*, by Chapman and Shirley, 1639:

"—have you devices to jeer the rest?
"Luc. All the regiment on 'em; or I'll break my bowstrings."

The

The *bowstrings* in both these instances may only mean the *strings* which make part of the *bow* with which musical instruments of several kinds are struck. The propriety of the allusion I cannot satisfactorily explain.

STEEVENS.

ACT II.

Line 2. *OVER* hill, over dale, &c.] So Drayton in his *Court of Fairy*:

Thorough brake, thorough brier;

Thorough muck, thorough mire;

Thorough water, thorough fire.

JOHNSON.

7. —the *moones sphere*] Unless we suppose this to be the Saxon genitive case (as it is here printed), the metre will be defective. So, in Spenser's *Faery Queen*, B. III. c. 1. st. 15.

"And eke through feare as white as *whales* bone."

So, in a letter from Gabriel Harvey to Spenser, 1586:

"Have we not *God hy's wrath*, for *Goddess's wrath*, and a thousand of the same stampe, wherein the corrupte orthography in the *moste*, has been the sole or principal cause of corrupte prosodye in over many?"

STEEVENS.

9. *To deta her orbs upon the green:*] For *orbs* Dr. Grey is inclined to substitute *herbs*. The *orbs* here mentioned are the circles supposed to be made by the

C

fairies

fairies on the ground, whose verdure proceeds from the fairy's care to water them. Thus Drayton:

They in their courses make that round,

In meadows and in marshes found,

Of them so called the fairy ground.

JOHNSON.

Thus in *Olaus Magnus de Gentibus Septentrionalibus*—*similes illis spectris, quæ in multis locis, præsertim nocturno tempore, suum, saltatorium orbem cum omnium musarum concentu versare solent.*” It appears from the same author, that these dancers always parched up the grass, and therefore it is properly made the office of Puck to refresh it. STEEVENS.

10. The cowslip was a favourite among the fairies. There is a hint in *Drayton* of their attention to May morning :

—*For the queen a fitting tow'r,*

Quoth he, is that fair cowslip flow'r.—

In all your train there's not a fay

That ever went to gather May,

But she hath made it in her way,

The tallest there that groweth.

JOHNSON.

11. *In their gold coats spots you see ;]* Shakspeare, in *Cymbeline*, refers to the same red spots :

“ A mole cinque-spotted, like the crimson drops

“ I' th' bottom of a cowslip.”

PERCY.

Perhaps there is likewise some allusion to the habit of a pensioner. See a note on the second act of the *Merry Wives of Windsor*.

STEEVENS.

15. *And hang a pearl in every cowslip's ear.]* The same thought occurs in an old comedy call'd *The*

Wisdom

Wisdom of Doctor Dodypoll, 1600; i. e. the same year in which the first printed copies of this play made their appearance. An enchanter says,

“ ’Twas I that led you through the painted meads

“ Where the light fairies danc’d upon the flowers,

“ *Hanging on every leaf an orient pearl.*”

STEEVENS.

16. —*lob of spirits*,—] *Lob, lubber, looby, lobcock*, all denote both inactivity of body, and dulness of mind.

JOHNSON.

Both *lob* and *lobcock* are used as terms of contempt in *The Rival Friends*, 1632.

Again, in the interlude of *Jacob and Esau*, 1568:

“ Should find Esau such a lout or a *lob*.”

Again, in the *Knight of the Burning Pestle*, by Beaumont and Fletcher: “ There is a pretty tale of a witch that had the devil’s mark about her, that had a giant to her son, that was called *Lob-lye-bye-the-fire*.” This being seems to be of kin to the *lubbar-fiend* of Milton, as Mr. Warton has remarked in his *Observations on the Faery Queen*.

STEEVENS.

23. —*changeling*:] i. e. A child got in exchange.

A Fairy is now speaking.

REMARKS.

So Spenser, B. I. c. 10.

“ And her base elfin brood there for thee left,

“ Such men do *changelings* call, so call’d by fairy theft.

STEEVENS.

29. —*Sheen*,] Shining, bright, gay. JOHNSON.

So, in *Tancred and Guismund*, 1592:

C ij

“ —but

“ ————but why

“ Doth Phæbus’ sister *sheen* despise thy power ?”

Again, in the ancient romance of *Syr Tryamour*,
pl. let. no date :

“ He kyssed and toke his leve of the quene,

“ And of other ladies bright and *shene*.”

STEEVENS.

30. *But they do square ;——]* To *square* here is to quarrel. The French word *contrecarrer* has the same import.

JOHNSON.

So, in *Jack Drum’s Entertainment*, 1601 :

“ ————let me not seem rude

“ That thus I seem to *square* with modesty.

“ ————pray let me go, for he’ll begin to *square*,”
&c.

Again, in *Promos and Cassandra*, 1578 :

“ Marry she knew you and I were at *square*,

“ And lest we fell to blowes, she did prepare.”

STEEVENS.

It is somewhat whimsical, that the glaziers use the words *square* and *quarrel* as synonymous terms, for a pane of glass.

BLACKSTONE.

34. ————*Robin Goodfellow :——]* This account of Robin Goodfellow corresponds, in every article, with that given of him in *Harsenet’s Declaration*, ch. xx. p. 135 : “ And if that the bowle of curds and creame were not duly set out for Robin Goodfellow, the frier, and Sisse the dairy-maid, why then either the pottage was burnt to next day in the pot, or the cheeses would not curdle, or the butter would not
come,

come, or the ale in the fat never would have got head. But if a pater-noster, or an housle egge were beſurned, or a patch of tythe unpaid—then beware of bull-beggars, ſpirits," &c. He is mentioned by Cartwright as a ſpirit particularly fond of diſconcerting and diſturbſing domeſtick peace and oeconomy.

*Saint Francis and Saint Benedight
Bleſſe this houſe from wicked wight;
From the night-mare and the goblin,
That is hight goodfellow Robin.
Keep it, &c.*

Cartwright's *Ordinary*, act iii. ſc. i. v. 8.

WARTON.

Reginald Scot gives the ſame account of this frolickſome ſpirit, in his *Discovery of Witchcraft*, Lond. 1588. 4to. p. 66. "Your grandames, maids, were wont to ſet a bowl of milk for him, for his pains in grinding of malt and muſtard, and ſweeping the houſe at midnight—this white bread and bread and milk, was his ſtanding fee." STEEVENS.

36. *Skim milk; and ſometimes labour in the quern,—*] A *Quern* is a hand-mill, kuerna, mola. Islandic. So in Stanyhurſt's tranſlation of the firſt book of *Virgil*, 1582, *quern*-ſtones are mill-ſtones:

"Theyre corne in quern-ſtoans they do grind," &c.

Again, in *The More the Merrier*, a collection of epi-grams, 1608:

"Which like a *querne* can grind more in an hour."

Ciii

Again,

Again, in the old Song of *Robin Goodfellow*, printed in the 3d volume of Dr. Percy's *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* :

"I grind at mill,

"Their malt up still," &c. STEEVENS.

38. —no barm ;] *Barme* is a name for yeast, yet used in our midland counties, and universally in Ireland. STEEVENS.

40. *Those that Hobgoblin call you, and sweet Puck,*

You do their work.——] To those traditionary opinions Milton has reference in *L' Allegro* :

Then to the spicy nut-brown ale,——

With stories told of many a feat,

How Fairy Mab the junkets eat ;

She was pinch'd and pull'd she said,

And he by friar's lanthorn led ;

Tell how the drudging goblin sweat

To earn his cream-bowl duly set,

When in one night, ere glimpse of morn,

His shadowy flail had thresh'd the corn,

Which ten day-labourers could not end ;

Then lies him down the lubber fiend.

A like account of Puck is given by Drayton, in his *Nymphidia* :

He meeteth Puck, which most men call

Hobgoblin, and on him doth fall.——

This Puck seems but a dreaming dolt,

Still walking like a ragged colt,

And oft out of a bed doth bolt,

Of purpose to deceive us ;

And

*And leading us makes us to stray,
Long winters' nights out of the way,
And when we stick in mire and clay,
He doth with laughter leave us.*

It will be apparent to him that shall compare Drayton's poem with this play, that either one of the poets copied the other, or, as I rather believe, that there was then some system of the fairy empire generally received, which they both represented as accurately as they could. Whether Drayton or Shakspeare wrote first, I cannot discover. JOHNSON.

The editor of the *Canterbury Tales of Chaucer*, in 4 vols. 8vo. 1775, has incontrovertibly proved Drayton to have been the follower of Shakspeare; for, says he, "*Don Quixot* (which was not published till 1605.) is cited in the *Nymphidia*, whereas we have an edition of the *Midsummer Night's Dream* in 1600."

In this century some of our poets have been as little scrupulous in adopting the ideas of their predecessors. In Gay's ballad, inserted in the *What d'ye call It*, is the following stanza:

"How can they say that nature
Has nothing made in vain;
Why then beneath the water
Should hideous rocks remain?" &c. &c.

Compare this with a passage in Chaucer's *Frankelincs Tale*, late edit. V. I. 11179, &c.

"In idel, as men sain, ye nothing make,
But, lord, thise grisly fendly rockes blake,"
&c. &c.

And

And Mr. Pope is more indebted to the same author for beauties in his *Eloisa to Abelard*, than he has been willing to acknowledge. STEEVENS.

If Drayton wrote the *Nymphidia* after the *Midsummer Night's Dream* had been acted, he could with very little propriety say,

“Than since no muse hath bin so bold,

“Or of the *later* or the *ould*,

“Those elvish secrets to unfold

“Which lye from others reading;

“My active muse to light shall bring

“The court of that proud fayry king

“And tell there of the revelling,

“Jove prosper my proceeding.” T. H. W.

—sweet *Puck*,] The epithet is by no means superfluous; as *Puck* alone was far from being an endearing appellation. It signified nothing better than *fiend*, or *devil*. So, the author of *Pierce Ploughman* puts *the pouk for the devil*, fol. xc. b. v. penult. See also fol. lxxvii. v. 15. “*none helle powke*.”

It seems to have been an old Gothic word, *Pukz*, *puken*; Sathanas. *Gudm. And. Lexicon Island.*

TYRWHITT.

In the *Bugbears*, an ancient MS. comedy in the possession of the Earl of Shelburne, I likewise met with this appellation of a fiend:

“*Pukes*, *puckerels*, hob howlard, bygorn and Robin Goodfellow. Again, in *The Scourge of Venus*, or *the Wanton Lady*, with the rare Birth of *Adonis*, 1614:

“Their

" Their bed doth shake and quaver as they lie,
 " As if it groan'd to beare the weight of sinne;
 " The fatal night-crowes at their windowes flee,
 " And crie out at the shame they do live in:
 " And that they may perceive the heavens frown,
 " The *poukes* and goblins pul the coverings
 down."

Again, in Spenser's *Epithal.* 1595:

" Ne let house-fyres, nor lightning's helpelesse
 harms,

" Ne let the *pouke*, nor other evil spright,

" Ne let mischievous witches with their charmes

" Ne let hobgoblin," &c. STEEVENS.

43. Puck. *Thou speak'st aright;*] I would fill up
 the verse which I suppose the author left complete:

I am, thou speak'st aright;

It seems that in the Fairy mythology, Puck, or
 Hobgoblin, was the trusty servant of Oberon, and
 always employed to watch or detect the intrigues of
 Queen Mab, called by Shakspeare Titania. For in
 Drayton's *Nymphidia*, the same fairies are engaged in
 the same business. Mab has an amour with Pig-
 widden; Oberon being jealous, sends Hobgoblin to
 catch them, and one of Mab's nymphs opposes him
 by a spell. JOHNSON.

49. — *a roasted crab;*] See the song at the end of
Love's Labour's Lost. STEEVENS.

52. *The wisest aunt,—*] *Aunt* is *procuress*. In Gas-
 coigne's *Glass of Government*, 1575, the *bawd* Panda-
 rina is always called *aunt*. " These are *aunts* of
 Antwerp,

Antwerp, which can make twenty marriages in one week for their kinswomen." See *Winter's Tale*, act iv. Among Ray's proverbial phrases is the following: "She is one of mine *aunts* that made mine uncle to go a begging." The *wisest aunt* may mean the most *sentimental bawd*.

STEEVENS.

This conjecture is much too wanton and injurious to the word *aunt*, which in this place at least certainly means no other than an *innocent old woman*.

REMARKS.

55. *And taylor cries—*] The custom of crying *taylor* at a sudden fall backwards, I think I remember to have observed. He that slips beside his chair, falls as a tailor squats upon his board. The Oxford editor, and Dr. Warburton after him, read *and rails or cries*, plausibly, but I believe not rightly. Besides, the trick of the fairy is represented as producing rather merriment than anger.

JOHNSON.

56. *—hold their hips, and loffe,]*

"And laughter holding both his sides."

Milton.

STEEVENS.

57. *And waxen—*] And increase, as the moon *waxes*.

JOHNSON.

61. Enter *Oberon*.] *Oberon* had been introduced on the stage in 1594, by some other author. In the Stationers' book is entered "The Scottishe story of James the fourth, slain at Floddon; intermixed with a pleasant comedie presented by *Oberon*, King of *Fairies*." The judicious editor of the *Canterbury Tales*

Tales of Chaucer, in his *Introductory Discourse* (See Vol. IV. p. 161.) observes, that *Pluto* and *Proserpina* in the *Marchant's Tale*, appear to have been "the true progenitors of Shakspeare's *Oberon* and *Titania*."

STEEVENS.

62. *Queen.*] As to the *Fairy Queen* (says Mr. Warton in his *Observations on Spenser*) considered apart from the race of fairies, the notion of such an imaginary personage was very common. Chaucer, in his *Rime of Sir Thopas*, mentions her, together with a Fairy land :

"In the old dayis of the king Arthure,
"Of which the Bretons speken great honour ;
"All was this lond fulfillid of fayry :
"The *Elf-queene*, with her jolly company
"Daunsid full oft in many a grene mede :
"This was the old opinion as I rede."

Wife of Bath's Tale.

STEEVENS.

78. *Didst thou not lead him through the glimmering night*] The *glimmering night* is the night faintly illuminated by stars. In *Macbeth* our author says :

"The west yet glimmers with some streaks of day."

STEEVENS.

79. *From Periguné whom he ravished ?*] *Periguné* (or *Perigyné*) was the daughter of *Sinnis*, a cruel robber, and tormentor of passengers in the Isthmus. *Plutarch* and *Athenæus* are both express in the circumstance of *Theseus* ravishing her. THEOBALD.

Ægle,

Ægle, Ariadne, and Antiope, were all at different times mistresses to Theseus. See Plutarch.

83. *And never, since the middle summer's spring, &c.]* There are not many passages in Shakspeare which one can be certain he has borrowed from the ancients; but this is one of the few that, I think, will admit of no dispute. Our author's admirable description of the miseries of the country being plainly an imitation of that which Ovid draws, as consequent on the grief of Cerus for the loss of her daughter:

*Nec scit adhuc ubi sit: terras tamen increpat omnes;
Ingratasque vocat, nec frugum munere dignas.*

— *Ergo illic sæva vertentia glebas*

Fregit aratra manu: parilique irata colonos

Ruricolasque boves leto dedit: arvaque jussit

Fallere depositum; vitiataque semina fecit.

Fertilitas terræ, latum vulgata per orbem,

Cassa jacet: primis segetes moriuntur in herbis:

Et modo sol nimius, nimius modo corripit imber:

Sideraque; ventique nocent.

THE middle summer's spring,] We should read *THAT*. For it appears to have been some years since the quarrel first began. WARBURTON.

By the middle summer's spring, our author seems to mean the *beginning* of *middle* or *mid* summer. *Spring* for *beginning* he uses again: *Henry IV. Part II.*

“As flaws congeal'd in the spring of day.”

which expression has authority from the scripture, St. Luke, ch. i. v. 78. “whereby the day-spring from on high hath visited us.”

Ovid had been translated by Golding:—the first four books in 1566, and all the rest, in a few years afterwards.

STEEVENS.

Dr. Warburton's reason for reading *That* instead of *The*, appears to be satisfactory, and authorized by the context. *The middle summer's spring*, is, I apprehend, the season when trees put forth their *second*, or as they are frequently called their *midsummer shoots*. Thus, Evelyn in his *Silva*: "Cut off all the side boughs, and especially at midsummer, if you spy them *breaking out*." And, again, "Where the rows and brush lie longer than *midsummer*, unbound, or made up, you endanger the loss of the *second spring*."

HENLEY.

85. —*paved fountain*, —] A fountain laid round the edge with stone.

JOHNSON.

Perhaps *paved* at the bottom. So, Lord Bacon in his *Essay on Gardens*: "As for the other kind of *fountain*, which we may call a bathing-pool, it may admit much curiosity and beauty. . . . As that the bottom be finely *paved* . . . the *sides* likewise," &c.

STEEVENS.

The epithet seems here intended to mean no more, than that the beds of these fountains were covered with pebbles, in opposition to those of the rushy brooks which are oozy. The same expression is used by Sylvester in a similar sense:

"By some cleare river's *lillie-PAVED* side."

HENLEY.

89. —*the winds, piping* —] So, Milton:

D

"While

"While rocking winds, are piping loud."

JOHNSON.

92. —*pelting river*—] Thus the quartos: the folio reads *petty*.

Shakspeare has in *Lear* the same word, *low pelting farms*. The meaning is plainly, *despicable, mean, sorry, wretched*; but as it is a word without any reasonable etymology, I should be glad to dismiss it for *petty*: yet it is undoubtedly right. We have "*petty pelting officer*, in *Measure for Measure*."

JOHNSON.

So, in Gascoigne's *Glass of Government*, 1575:

"Doway is a *pelting* town pack'd full of poor scholars."

This word is always used as a term of contempt. So again, in Lylly's *Midas*, 1592: "—attire never used but of old women and *pelting* priests."

STEEVENS.

93. ———*overborne their* continents.] Borne down the banks that contain them. So in *Lear*:

"———*close pent up* guilts

"*Rive your concealing* continents!" JOHNSON.

98. ———*murrain flock*:] The *murrain* is the plague in cattle. It is here used by Shakspeare as an adjective; as a substantive by others:

"———sends him as a *murrain*

"To strike our herds; or as a worser plague,

"Your people to destroy."

Heywood's *Silver Age*, 1613.

STEEVENS.

99. *The nine men's morris is fill'd up with mud;*] In that part of Warwickshire where Shakspeare was educated, and the neighbouring parts of Northamptonshire, the shepherds and other boys dig up the turf with their knives, to represent a sort of imperfect chess-board. It consists of a square, sometimes only a foot diameter, sometimes three or four yards. Within this is another square, every side of which is parallel to the external square; and these squares are joined by lines drawn from each corner of both squares, and the middle of each line. One party, or player, has wooden pegs, the other stones, which they move in such a manner as to take up each other's men as they are called, and the area of the inner square is called the Pound, in which the men taken up are impounded. These figures are by the country people called *Nine Men's Morris*, or *Merrils*, and are so called, because each party has nine men. These figures are always cut upon the green turf or leys, as they are called, or upon the grass at the end of ploughed lands, and in rainy seasons never fail to be *choked up with mud*.

JAMES.

See Peck on Milton's *Masque*, 115, Vol. I. p. 135.

STEEVENS.

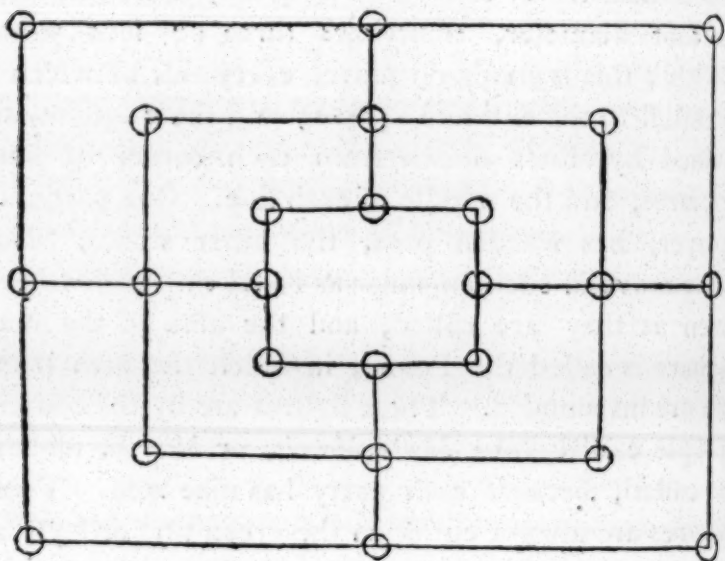
Nine men's morris is a game still play'd by the shepherds, cowkeepers, &c. in the midland counties, as follows :

A figure is made on the ground (like this which I have drawn) by cutting out the turf; and two persons take each nine stones, which they place by turns

D i j

in

in the angles, and afterwards more alternately, as at chess or drafts. He who can place three in a strait line, may then take off any one of his adversary's where he pleases, till one, having lost all his men, loses the game.



ALCHORNE.

In Cotgrave's *Dictionary*, under the articles *Merelles*, is the following explanation. "Le Jeu des Merelles. The boyish game called Merils, or fivepenny morris; played here most commonly with stones, but in France with pawns, or men made on purpose, and termed *merelles*." The pawns or figures of men used in the game might originally be *black*, and hence called *morris*, or *merelles*, as we yet term a black cherry a *morello*,

morello, and a small black cherry a *merry*, perhaps from *Maurus* a *Moor*, or rather from *morum* a mulberry.

TOLLET.

102. *The human mortals*——] Shakspeare might have employed this epithet, which, at first sight, appears redundant, to mark the difference between *men* and *fairies*. *Fairies* were not *human*, but they were yet *subject to mortality*.

STEEVENS.

See their genealogy in Spenser's *Faery Queen*, B. II. c. 10, or has it has been epitomized by Mr. Warton in his *Observations on Spenser*, Vol. I. p. 55.

KEED.

It should seem, however, by what follows, that Shakspeare considered *Fairies* as *immortal*: for Titania, speaking of her henchman's mother, remarks to Oberon:

“But she, being *mortal*, of that boy did die.”

If this observation be founded, the sense of the epithet is obvious.

HENLEY.

102. *The human mortals want their winter* HERE,] Dr Warburton, under the idea that winter is an evil which human mortals would gladly be exempt from, proposes to read:

“*The human mortals want their winter* HERVED”—that is, *praised, celebrated*; and considers this alteration as confirmed by the line that follows.

According to a news-paper critick, cited by Mr. Reed, the *human mortals*, mean the distressed Amazons whom Theseus had conquered; whilst *here* is to be understood of Hippolita their princess, who was

Diij

carried

carried captive by Theseus to Athens: it being an old word from the *Teutonic* HERR, *Belgic*, HEER, *Dominus*; and both from the *Latin* HERUS, a lord or master.

The human mortals want their winter *here*, *i. e.* "their princess, the encourager of their winter revels." For the use of the word *here* he refers to Douglas's Virgil, fol. 258. l. 49, &c. &c.

Dr. Johnson, after all the endeavours of preceding editors, considers the passage as still unintelligible, and therefore proposes not only to read for *winter here*, WONTED YEAR; but also to dislocate in two instances the arrangement of the passage; for which he, however, confesses, that he neither gives himself credit, nor expects it from the reader.

Sir T. Hanmer proposed to read *cheer*, and with him concur Mr. Tyrwhitt and Mr. Malone, the latter remarking that the first folio reads *heere*.

To me, however, the sense of the passage appears unembarrassed. That *cheer* could not have been the true reading seems obvious; as the evils complained of were not felt *universally*, but confined to those ONLY who inhabited the immediate district of the Fairies' haunt—The human mortals want their winter *here*.

The reason that

No night is now with hymn or carol blest :—
abundantly appears from the prevailing distemperature of the seasons (*the 'mazed world not knowing which is which*), and the evils resulting from them.

These

These evils—which not only render the face of the earth unpleasant, but destroy also the hopes of the coming year, cut off the flocks, infect the human constitution with diseases, and preclude the customary festivities of the time—the wholesome severities of a dry winter are ever effectual to remove.

HENLEY.

The repeated adverb, *therefore*, throughout this speech, I suppose to have constant reference to the first time when it is used.—All these irregularities of season, happened in consequence of the disagreement between the king and queen of the fairies, and not in consequence of each other.—Ideas crowded fast on Shakspeare; and as he committed them to paper, he did not attend to the distance of the leading object from which they took their rise.—Mr. Malone concurs with me on this occasion.

That the festivity and hospitality attending Christmas, decreased, was the subject of complaint to many of our ludicrous writers.—Among the rest to Nash, whose comedy, called *Summer's Last Will and Testament*, made its first appearance in the same year with this play, viz. 1600. There *Christmas* is introduced, and Summer says to him:

“Christmas, how chance thou com'st not as the rest

“Accompanied with some musick or some song?

“A merry carrol would have grac'd thee well,

“Thy ancestors have us'd it heretofore.”

Christmas.

Christmas. "Ay, antiquity was the mother of ignorance," &c. and then proceeds to give reasons for such a decay in mirth and house-keeping.

The confusion of seasons here described, is no more than a poetical account of the weather, which happened in England about the time when this play was first published. For this information I am indebted to chance, which furnished me with a few leaves of an old meteorological history. STEEVENS.

107. ————*distemperature,*———] is *perturbation* of the elements. STEEVENS.

109. *Fall in the fresh lap of the crimson rose ;]* To have, "snow in the *lap* of June," is an expression used in *Northward Hoe*, 1607, and Shakspeare himself in *Coriolanus*, talks of the "consecrated snow that lies on Dian's *lap*:" and Spenser in his *Faery Queen*, B. II. c. 2. has:

"And fills with flow'rs fair Flora's painted *lap*."

STEEVENS.

110. *And on old Hyem's chin, and icy crown,]* I believe this peculiar image of *Hyem's chin* must come from Virgil, through the medium of the translation of the day. *Æn.* iv. 251.

"———Tum flumina mento

"Præcipitant senis, et glacie riget horrida barba."

Virgil borrowed the idea from Sôphocles' *Trachiniæ*, v. 13.

S. W.

For *chin*, Mr. Tyrwhitt conjectures the poet wrote *thin*, i. e. thin-hair'd.

So,

So, Cordelia speaking of *Lear* :

“ ———to watch poor perdu !

“ With this *thin* helm.”

STEEVENS.

113. *The childing autumn*——] Is the *pregnant autumn*, *frugifer autumnus*.

So, in Heywood's *Golden Age*, 1611 :

“ I *childed* in a cave remote and silent.”

Again, in his *Silver Age*, 1613 :

“ And at one instant she shall *child* two issues.”

There is a *rose* called the *childing rose*. STEEVENS.

115. *By their increase*,——] That is, *By their produce*. JOHNSON.

So, in our author's 97th *Sonnet* :

“ The teeming autumn, big with rich *increase*,

“ Bearing the wanton burthen of the prime”——

MALONE.

122. ——*henchman*.] Page of honour. This office was abolished by queen Elizabeth. GREY.

The office might be abolished at court, but probably remained in the city. Glapthorne, in his comedy, called, *Wit in a Constable*, 1637, has this passage :

“ ——I will teach his *hench-boys*,

“ Serjeants, and trumpeters to act, and save

“ The city all that charges.”

So, again :

“ When she was lady may'ress, and you humble

“ As her trim *hench-boys*.”

Again, in Ben Jonson's *Christmas Masque*,——“ he said grace as well as any of the sheriff's *hench-boys*.”

Skinner

Skinner derives the word from Hine A. S. quasi domesticus famulus. Spelman from Hengstman, equi curator, ἵπποκομος. STEEVENS.

Upon the establishment of the household of Edward IV. were "*henxmen six enfants, or more, as it pleyseth the king, eatinge in the halle, &c. There was also a maister of the henxmen, to shewe them the schoole of nurture, and learne them to ride, to wear their harnesse; to have all curtesie—to teach them all languages, and other virtues, as harping, pypinge, singinge, dauncinge, with honest behavioure of temperaunce and patyence.*" MS. Harl. 293.

At the funeral of Henry VIII. nine *henchmen* attended with Sir Francis Bryan, *master of the henchmen.*

Strype's Eccl. Mem. v. 2 App. n. 1.

TYRWHITT.

—*Henchmen.* Quasi haunch-man. One that goes behind another. *Pedisequus.* BLACKSTONE.

The learned commentator might have given his etymology some support from the following passage in *King Henry IV.* Part II.

"O Westmoreland! thou art a summer bird,

"Which ever in the *haunch* of winter sings

"The lifting up of day."

STEEVENS.

150. ————*Thou remember'st*

Since once I sat upon a promontory,

And heard a mermaid, on a dolphin's back,

Uttering such dulcet and harmonious breath,

That the rude sea grew civil at her song;

And

*And certain stars shot madly from their spheres,
To hear the sea-maid's musick.]*

The first thing observable on these words is, that this action of the *mermaid* is laid in the same time and place with Cupid's attack upon the *vestal*. By the *vestal* every one knows is meant queen Elizabeth. It is very natural and reasonable then to think, that the *mermaid* stands for some eminent personage of her time. And if so, the allegorical covering, in which there is a mixture of satire and panegyrick, will lead us to conclude, that this person was one of whom it had been inconvenient for the author to speak openly, either in praise or dispraise. All this agrees with Mary queen of Scots, and with no other. Queen Elizabeth could not bear to hear her commended; and her successor would not forgive her satirist. But the poet has so well marked out every distinguished circumstance of her life and character in this beautiful allegory, as will leave no room to doubt about his secret meaning. She is called a *mermaid*, 1. to denote her reign over a kingdom situate in the sea, and 2. her beauty, and intemperate lust:

“ ———— *Ut iupiter atrum*

Desinat in piscem mulier formosa superne.”

For as Elizabeth for her chastity is called a *vestal*, this unfortunate lady, on a contrary account, is called a *mermaid*. 3. An ancient story may be supposed to be here alluded to. The emperor Julian tells us, Epistle 41. that the Sirens (which, with all the modern poets, are *mermaids*) contended for precedency with

the

the Muses, who, overcoming them, took away their wings. The quarrels between Mary and Elizabeth had the same cause, and the same issue.

—on a dolphin's back,] This evidently marks out that distinguishing circumstance of Mary's fortune, her marriage with the dauphin of France, son of Henry II.

Uttering such dulcet and harmonious breath,] This alludes to her great abilities of genius and learning, which rendered her the most accomplished princess of her age. The French writers tell us, that, while she was in that court, she pronounced a Latin oration in the great hall of the Louvre, with so much grace and eloquence, as filled the whole court with admiration.

That the rude sea grew civil at her song;] By the *rude sea* is meant Scotland encircled with the ocean; which rose up in arms against the regent, while she was in France. But her return home presently quieted those disorders: and had not her strange ill conduct afterwards more violently inflamed them, she might have passed her whole life in peace. There is the greater justness and beauty in this image, as the vulgar opinion is, that the mermaid always sings in storms:

*And certain stars shot madly from their spheres,
To hear the sea-maid's musick.*

Thus concludes the description, with that remarkable circumstance of this unhappy lady's fate, the destruction she brought upon several of the English nobility, whom

whom she drew in to support her cause. This, in the boldest expression of the sublime, the poet images by *certain stars shooting madly from their spheres*: By which he meant the earls of Northumberland and Westmoreland, who fell in her quarrel; and principally the great duke of Norfolk, whose projected marriage with her was attended with such fatal consequences. Here again the reader may observe a peculiar justness in the imagery. The vulgar opinion being that the mermaid allured men to destruction by her songs. To which opinion Shakspeare alludes in his *Comedy of Errors*:

“O train me not, sweet mermaid, with thy note,

“To drown me in thy sister's flood of tears!”

On the whole, it is the noblest and justest allegory that was ever written. The laying it in *fairy land*, and out of nature, is in the character of the speaker. And on these occasions Shakspeare always excels himself. He is borne away by the magick of his enthusiasm, and hurries his reader along with him into these ancient regions of poetry, by that power of verse which we may well fancy to be like what:

“———*Olim Fauni Vatesque canebant.*”

WARBURTON.

And certain *stars shot madly from their spheres*,] So, in our author's *Rape of Lucrece*:

“And little *stars shot from their fixed places.*”

MALONE.

* 160. *Cupid all arm'd*:] *All armed*, does not signify
E dressed

dressed in panoply, but only enforces the word *armed*, as we might say *all booted*.

JOHNSON.

So, in Greene's *Never too Late*, 1616:

"Or where proud Cupid sate *all arm'd* with fire."

STEEVENS.

161. *At a fair vestal, throned by the west;*] It was no uncommon thing to introduce a compliment to queen *Elizabeth* in the body of a play. So, again, in *Tancred and Gismund*, 1592:

"There lives a virgin, one without compare,

"Who of all graces hath her heavenly share;

"In whose renown, and for whose happy days,

"Let us record this Pæan of her praise."

Cantant.

STEEVENS.

171. *And maidens call it, love-in-idleness.*] This is as fine a metamorphosis as any in *Ovid*: with a much better moral, intimating, that irregular love has only power when people are idle, or not well employed.

WARBURTON.

I believe the singular beauty of this metamorphosis to have been quite accidental, as the poet is of another opinion, in the *Taming the Shrew*, act i. sc. 1.

"But see, while *idly* I stood looking on,

"I found th' effect of *love in idleness*;

"And now in plainness I confess to thee,

"Tranio, I burn, I pine, I perish, Tranio,

"If I achieve not this young *modest* girl."

And Lucentio's was surely a regular and honest passion. It is scarce necessary to mention, that *love in*

idleness

idleness is a flower. Taylor, the water-poet, quibbling on the names of plants, mentions it as follows :

“ When passions are let loose without a bridle,

“ Then precious *time* is turn'd to *love in idle*.”

STEEVENS.

The flower or violet, commonly called pansies, or heart's ease, is named *love in idleness* in Warwickshire, and in Lyte's Herbal. There is a reason why Shakspeare says it is, “ now *purple* with love's wound,” because two of its petals are of a purple colour.

TOLLET.

It is called in other counties the *Three coloured violet*, the *Herb of Trinity*, *Three faces in a hood*, *Cuddle me to you*, &c.

STEEVENS.

178. *I'll put a girdle round about the earth, &c.*]

This expression occurs in the *Bird in a Cage*, 1633 :

Perhaps, it is proverbial :

“ And when I have put a *girdle 'bout the world*,

“ This purchase will reward me.”

Again, in *Bussy d'Ambois*, by Chapman, 1613 :

“ To put a *girdle round about the world*.”

And in other plays.

STEEVENS.

190. ——— *I am invisible* ;] I thought proper here to observe, that as Oberon, and Puck his attendant, may be frequently observed to speak when there is no mention of their entering, they are designed by the poet to be supposed on the stage during the greatest part of the remainder of the play ; and to mix, as they please, as spirits, with the other actors ;

and embroil the plot, by their interposition, without being seen or heard, but when to their own purpose.

THEOBALD.

196. ———— and wood, ————] Wood, or mad,
wild, raving.

POPE.

We meet with the word in Chaucer, in the character of the *Monk*, late edit. v. 184.

“What, should he studie, or make himselfen
wood?”

Spenser also uses it, *Æglogue III. March*:

“The elf was so wanton, and so wode.”

“The name *Woden*,” says Verstegan in his *Antiquities*, “signifies fierce or furious;” and in like sense we still retain it, saying when one is in a great rage, that he is *wood*, or taketh on, as if he were *wood*.

STEEVENS.

199. *You draw me, you hard-hearted adamant;*

But yet you draw not iron,—] I learn from

Edward Fenton's *Certaine Secrete Wonders of Nature*, bl. let. 1569, that—“there is now a dayes a kind of adamant which draweth unto it fleshe, and the same so strongly, that it hath power to knit and tie together, two mouthes of contrary persons, and drawe the heart of a man out of his bodie without offending any parte of him.”

STEEVENS.

227. *Nor doth the wood lack worlds of company;]*

The same thought occurs in the 2d Part of *King Henry VI*.

“A wilderness is populous enough,

“So Suffolk had thy heavenly company.”

Again,

Again, in Marston's *Dutch Courtezan*, 1605 :

" So could I live in desert most unknowen,

" Yourself to me enough were populous."

MALONE.

233. *The wildest hath not such a heart as you.*]

" Mitius inveni quam te genus omne ferarum."

Ovid.

See Timon of Athens, act iv. sc. 1.

" ————where he shall find

" The unkindest beast more kinder than mankind."

S. W.

255. *Where ox-lips——]* The *ox-lip* is the greater *cowslip*.

So, in Drayton's *Polyolbion*, Song 15.

" To sort these flowers of shoue, with other that were sweet,

" The cowslip then they couch, and th' *oxlip* for her meet."

STEEVENS.

255. *Quite over-canopy'd with luscious woodbine,*]

Thus all the old editions.

On the margin of one of my folios an unknown hand has written *lush* woodbine, which, I think is right.

This hand I have since discovered to be Theobald's.

JOHNSON.

Shakspeare uses the word *lush* in *The Tempest*, act ii.

" How *lush* and lusty the grass looks? how green?"

STEEVENS.

Both *lush* and *luscious* are words of the same origin.

HENLEY.

274. ——— a roundel and a fairy song ;] *Rounds or roundels* are thus described by Sir John Davies, in his *Orchestra*, 1622 :

“ Then first of all he doth demonstrate plain
 “ The motions seven that are in nature found,
 “ Upward and downward, forth and back again
 “ To this side, and to that, and turning round ;
 “ Whereof a thousand brawls he doth compound,
 “ Which he doth teach unto the multitude,
 “ And ever with a turn they must conclude.
 “ * * * * *

“ Thus when at first love had them marshalled,
 “ As erst he did the shapeless mass of things,
 “ He taught them *rounds* and *winding ways* to tread,
 “ And about trees to cast themselves in rings :
 “ As the two bears whom the first mover flings
 “ With a short turn about heaven’s axletree,
 “ In a round dance for ever wheeling be.”

REED.

A *roundell*, *rondill*, or *roundelay*, is used to signify a song beginning or ending with the same sentence, *redit in orbem*.

Puttenham, in his *Art of Poetry*, 1589, has a chapter *On the roundel, or sphere*, and produces what he calls, *A general resemblance of the roundel to God, the world, and the queen*.

STEEVENS.

A *roundel*; that is, as I suppose, a *circular dance*. Ben Jonson seems to call *the rings* which such dances are supposed to make in the grass, *rondels*. Vol. V. *Tale of a Tub*, p. 23.

“ I’ll

"I'll have no *rondels*, I, in the queen's paths."

TYRWHITT.

275. *Then, for the third part of a minute, hence:]*

So the old copies. But the queen sets them work, that is, to keep them employed for the remainder of the night; the poet, undoubtedly, intended her to say, Dance your round, and sing your song, and then instantly (before the third part of a minute) begone to your respective duties.

THEOBALD.

Dr. Warburton reads:

———*for the third part of the midnight.*

The persons employed are *fairies*, to whom the third part of a minute might not be a very short time to do such work in. The critick might as well have objected to the epithet *tall*, which the fairy bestows on the *crowslip*. But Shakspeare, throughout the play, has preserved the proportion of other things in respect of these tiny beings, compared with whose size, a *crowslip* might be tall, and to whose powers of execution, a minute might be equivalent to an age.

STEEVENS.

277. ——*with rear-mice——*] A *rere-mouse* is a bat, a *mouse* that *rears* from the ground by the aid of wings. So, in *Albertus Wallenstein*, 1640:

"———dull

"Half-spirited souls, who strive on *rere-mice* wings."

Again, in Ben Jonson's *New-Inn*:

"———I keep no shades

"Nor shelters, I, for either owls or *rere-mice*."

STEEVENS.

280. ———quaint spirits:———] For this Dr. Warburton reads, against all authority:

———quaint sports———

But Prospero, in *The Tempest*, applies *quaint* to Ariel.

JOHNSON.

“Our quaint *spirits*.” Dr. Johnson is right in the word, and Dr. Warburton in the interpretation. A *spirit* was sometimes used for a *sport*. In Decker’s play, *If it be not good the Devil is in It*, the king of Naples says to the devil Ruffman, disguised in the character of Shalcan :

“Now Shalcan, some new *spirit*? Ruff. A thousand wenches stark-naked to play at *leap-frog*.
Omnes. O rare sight!”

FARMER.

297. Hence, away, &c.] This, according to all the editions, is made part of the song; but I think without sufficient reason, as it appears to be spoken after the song is over. In the quarto 1600, it is given to the 2d Fairy; but the other division is better.

STEEVEN’S.

302. Be it ounce,——] The ounce is a small tiger, or tiger-cat.

JOHNSON.

317. O, take the sense, sweet, of my innocence;

Love takes the meaning, in love’s conference.]

Lysander in the language of love professes, that as they have one heart, they shall have one bed; this Hermia thinks rather too much, and entreats him to lie further off. Lysander answers:

O take the sense, sweet, of my innocence;

understand

understand *the meaning of my innocence, or my innocent meaning*. Let no suspicion of ill enter thy mind:

Love takes the meaning, in love's conference.

In the conversation of those who are assured of each other's kindness, not *suspicion* but *love takes the meaning*. No malevolent interpretation is to be made, but all is to be received in the sense which *love* can find, and which *love* can dictate.

JOHNSON.

The latter line is certainly intelligible as Dr. Johnson has explained it; but, I think, it requires a slight alteration to make it connect well with the former. I would read;

Love take the meaning in love's conference.

That is, Let *love take the meaning*.

TYRWHITT.

There is no occasion for alteration. The idea is exactly similar to that of St. Paul: "Love thinketh no evil."

HENLEY.

320. —we can *make of it*:] The folio, instead of *we can*, reads *can you*.

STEEVENS.

321. —*interchained*—] Thus the quarto; the folio *interchanged*.

STEEVENS.

326. *Now much beshrew, &c.*] This word, of which the etymology is not exactly known, implies a sinister wish, and means the same as if she had said "now *ill befall* my manners," &c. It is used by Heywood in his *Iron Age*, 1632:

"*Beshrew* your amorous rhetorick,"

Again,

"Well, Paris, I *beshrew* you, with my heart."

STEEVENS.

See

See Minshew's etymology of it, which seems to be an imprecation or wish of such evil to one, as the venomous biting of the *shrew-mouse*. TOLLET.

349. *Near to this lack-love, this kill-courtesy.*] Mr. Theobald and Sir T. Hanmer, for the sake of the measure, leave out *this lack-love*. I have only omitted the words *to* and *this*. STEEVENS.

The old copy has not *to*. Might we not therefore adhere to it, and at the same time preserve the measure, by printing the line thus :

Near this lack-love, this kill-court'sy.

We meet with the same abbreviation in our author's *Venus and Adonis* :

"They all strain court'sy, who shall cope him first." MALONE.

358. ——— *wilt thou darkling leave me ?* ———] So, in the *Two Angry Women of Abington*, 1599 : "—we'll run away with the torch, and leave them to fight *darkling*." The word is likewise used by Milton.

STEEVENS.

361. ——— *my grace.*] My acceptableness, the favour that I can gain. JOHNSON.

385. *Not Hermia, but Helena I love :*] The first folio has :

——— *but Helena now I love.* MALONE.

391. ——— *touching now the point of human skill,*] *i. e.* my senses being now at their utmost height of perfection. So, in *K. Henry VIII.*

"I have *touch'd* the highest *point* of all my greatness." STEEVENS.

392. *Reason becomes the marshal to my will,*] That is,
My will now follows reason. JOHNSON.

So, in *Macbeth* :

“Thou marshal’st me the way that I was going.”

STEEVENS.

404. ————*true gentleness.*] *Gentleness* is equivalent
to what, in modern language, we should call the
spirit of a gentleman. PERCY.

412. ————*those they did deceive;*] The folio
reads—*that* did deceive. MALONE.

422. *And you—*] Instead of *you*, the elder folio
reads *yet*. Mr. Pope first gave the right word from the
quarto 1600. STEEVENS.

426. *Speak, of all loves ;—*] *Of all loves*, is an ad-
juration more than once used by our author. So,
Merry Wives, &c. act ii.

“—————to send her your little page, *of all*
loves.” STEEVENS.

428. *Or death, or you, &c.*] The folio 1623, and
the quarto 1600, instead of the first *or*, read *either*.

STEEVENS.

ACT III.

Line 1. *ENTER* Quince, &c.] The two quartos 1600, and the folio, read only, *Enter the Clowns.*

STEEVENS.

13. *By'rlakin, a parlous fear.*] By our ladykin, or little lady, as *ifakins* is a corruption of *by my faith*. The former is used in *Preston's Cambyses*:

"The clock hath stricken vive ich think by laken."

Again, in *Magnificence*, an ancient folio interlude, written by Skelton, and printed by Rastell:

"By our lakin, syr, not by my will."

Parlous, a word corrupted from *perilous*, i. e. dangerous. So, Phaer and Twyne translate *Virg. Æn.* lib. vii. 302:

"*Quid Syrtes, aut Scylla mihi, quid vasta Charybdis*

"*Profuit?*"

"What good did Scylla me? What could prevail Charybdis wood?"

"Or Sirtes *parlous* sands?"

STEEVENS.

75. —that brake;—] *Brake* a thicket or bush.

Brake, in the west of England, is used to express a large extent of ground over-grown with furze, and appears both here and in the next scene to convey the same idea:

"The

"The shallowest thick skin of the barren sort
"Forsook his scene, and enter'd in a *brake*."

HENLEY.

85. So doth *thy breath*,—] The old copies concur in reading :

So hath *thy breath*,——

Mr. Pope, I believe, first made the alteration.

STEEVENS.

86. ————*stay thou but ere a whit*,] In the old editions :

———*stay thou but here a while* ;

The verses should be alternately in rhyme ; but *sweet* in the close of the first line, and *while* in the third, will not do for this purpose. The author, doubtless, gave it :

———*stay thou but here a whit* ;

i. e. a little while : for so it signifies, as also any thing of no price or consideration ; a trifle : in which sense it is very frequent with our author.

THEOBALD.

88. ———*than e'er play'd here* !] I suppose he means in that theatre where the piece was acting.

STEEVENS.

95. ———*juvenal*,——] *i. e.* young man. So, Falstaff, "——the *juvenal* thy master." STEEVENS.

100. ———*cues and all*.] A *cue*, in stage cant, is the last words of the preceding speech, and serves as a hint to him who is to speak next. So *Othello* :

"Were it my *cue* to fight, I should have known it

"Without a prompter."

F

So,

So, in the *Return from Parnassus* :

“ Indeed, master *Kempe*, you are very famous : but that is as well for works in print, as your part in *cue*.”
Kempe was one of *Shakspeare*’s fellow comedians.

STEEVENS.

103. *If I were fair, Thisby, I were only thine.*] I think, this ought to be pointed differently :—If I were, [*i. e.* as true, &c.] fair *Thisbe*, I were only thine.

MALONE.

107. *Through bog, through bush, through brake, through brier ;*] Here are two syllables wanting. Perhaps, it was written :

Through bog, through mire,—— JOHNSON.

113. ——*to make me afeard.*] *Afeard* is from *to fear*, by the old form of the language, as *an hungered*, from *to hunger*. So *adry*, for *thirsty*. JOHNSON.

114. *O Bottom, thou art chang’d ! what do I see on thee ?*] It is plain by *Bottom*’s answer, that *Snout* mentioned an *ass’s head*. Therefore we should read :

Snout. O Bottom, thou art changed ! what do I see on thee ?

An ass’s head ?

JOHNSON.

125. *The ousel-cock,*——] The *ousel-cock* is generally understood to be the cock blackbird. Ben Jonson uses the word in *The Devil is an Ass* :

“ ——stay till cold weather come,

“ I’ll help thee to an *ouzel* and a field-fare.”

P. Holland, however, in his translation of *Pliny’s Natural History*, B. X. c. 24. represents the *ouzel* and the

the *blackbird*, as different birds. See also Sir Ashton Lever's *Museum*.

127. *The throstle with his note so true,*] So, in the old metrical romance of *The Squhr of Low Degree*, bl. let. no date:

“The pee and the popinjaye,

“The *thrustele*, sayinge both nyght and daye.”

Again, in the first book of Gower *De Confessione Amantis*, 1554:

“The *throstle* with the nightingale.”

It appears from the following passage in Thomas Newton's *Herball to the Bible*, 8vo. 1587, that the *throstle* is a distinct bird from the *thrush*. “—There is also another sorte of myrte or myrtle which is wild, whose berries the mavises, *throssels*, owsells, and thrushes, delite much to eate.” STEEVENS.

131. —*plain-song cuckow*, &c.] That is, the cuckoo, who, having no variety of strains, sings in *plain song*, or in *plano cantu*, by which expression the uniform modulation or simplicity of the *chaunt* was anciently distinguished, in opposition to *prick-song*, or variegated musick sung by note. Skelton introduces the birds singing the different parts of the service of the funeral of his favourite sparrow: among the rest is the cuckoo. P. 277. edit. Lond. 1736:

“But with a large and a long

“To keep just *playne songe*

“Our chanter shall be your *cuckoue*.”

WARTON.

“Our

“Our life is a *plain song* with cunning penn’d.”

Return from Parnassus.

Again, in *Hans Béer-pot’s Invisible Comedy*, &c.

“The cuckoo sings not worth a groat

“Because she *never changeth note*.” STEEVENS.

138. *Mine ear is much enamour’d of thy note ;
So is mine eye enthralled to thy shape ;
And thy fair virtue’s force, perforce doth move
me,*

On the first view to say, to swear, I love thee.]

These lines are in one quarto of 1600, the first folio of 1623, the second of 1632, and the third of 1664, &c. ranged in the following order ;

*Mine ear is much enamour’d of thy note,
On the first view to say, to swear, I love thee ;
So is mine eye enthralled to thy shape,
And thy fair virtue’s force (perforce) doth move me.*

This reading I have inserted, not that it can suggest any thing better than the order to which the lines have been restored by Mr. Theobald from another quarto, but to shew that some liberty of conjecture must be allowed in the revisal of works so inaccurately printed, and so long neglected.

JOHNSON.

146. —gleek—] Joke or scoff. POPE.

Gleek was originally a game at cards. The word is often used by our ancient comick writers in the same sense as by our author.

So, in *Mother Bombie*, 1594 :

“There’s *gleek* for you, let me have my gird.”

Mr. Lambe observes in his notes on the ancient me-

trical

trical history of the *Battle of Floddon*, that in the north to glee is to *deceive*, or *beguile*; and that the reply made by the queen of the fairies, proves this to be the meaning of it.

STEEVENS.

166. — *Where shall we go?*] Perhaps this question should be proposed by the four fairies together.

STEEVENS.

169. — *dewberries,*] *Dewberries* strictly and properly are the fruit of one of the species of wild bramble called the creeping or the lesser bramble: but as they stand here among the more delicate fruits, they must be understood to mean raspberries, which are also of the bramble kind.

HAWKINS.

Dewberries are *gooseberries*, which are still so called in several parts of the kingdom.

HENLEY.

173. — *the fiery glow-worm's eyes,*] I know not how Shakspeare, who commonly derived his knowledge of nature from his own observation, happened to place the glow-worm's light in his eyes, which is only in his tail.

JOHNSON.

180. — *hail!*] Out of the four fairies, only three address themselves to Bottom. If this salutation be given to the second fairy, the repetition of the same word will serve for the other two.

STEEVENS.

184. *I shall desire you of more acquaintance,* —] This line has been very unnecessarily altered. The same mode of expression occurs in *Lusty Juventus*, a morality, 1561:

“I shall desire *you* of better acquaintance.”

F iij

Such

Such phraseology was very common to many of our ancient writers.

So, in *An Humourous Day's Mirth*, 1599 :

“ I do desire you of more acquaintance.”

Again, in Greene's *Groatsworth of Wit*, 1621 :

“ —craving you of more acquaintance.”

STEEVENS.

I shall desire you of more acquaintance, good master Cobweb; If I cut my finger I shall make bold with you.]

In *The Mayde's Metamorphosis*, a comedy, by Lilly, there is a dialogue between some foresters and a troop of fairies, very similar to the present.

“ *Mopso*. I pray you, sir, what might I call you?

“ 1 *Fai*. My name is Penny.

“ *Mopso*. I am sorry I cannot purse you.

“ *Frisco*. I pray you, sir, what might I call you?

“ 2 *Fai*. My name is Cricket.

“ *Fris*. I would I were a chimney for your sake.”

The Maid's Metamorphosis was not printed till 1600, but was probably written some years before.

MALONE.

188. —mistress Squash, your mother,] A squash is an immature peascod. So, in *Twelfth Night*, act i.

“ —as a squash is before 'tis a peascod.”

STEEVENS.

193. ———patience] By *patience* is meant, standing still in a mustard pot to be eaten with the beef, on which it was a constant attendant.

COLLINS.

203. ———my love's tongue—] The old copies read :

—my

——my lover's *tangue*—— STEEVENS.

208. *What* night-rule——] *Night-rule* in this place should seem to mean, what frolick of the night, what revelry is going forward?

It appears, from the old song of *Robin Goodfellow*, in the third volume of Dr. Percy's *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*, that it was the office of this waggish spirit "to viewe the night-sports." STEEVENS.

212. ——*patches*,——] Puck calls the players, "a crew of *patches*." A common opprobrious term, which probably took its rise from *Patch*, cardinal Wolsey's fool. In the western counties, *cross-patch* is still used for *perverse*, *ill-natur'd fool*. WARTON.

The name was rather taken from the *patch'd* or *pyed* coats worn by the fools or jesters of those times. So, in the *Tempest*:

"——what a *py'd* Ninny's this?"

Again, in *Preston's Cambyzes*:

"Hob and Lob, ah ye country *patches*!"

Again, in the *Three Ladies of London*, 1584:

"It is simplicitie, that *Patch*." STEEVENS.

220. ——*nowl*——] A head. Saxon. JOHNSON.

So, Chaucer, in *The History of Beryn*, 1524:

"No sothly, quoth the steward, it lieth all in thy *noll*,

"Both wit and wysdom," &c.

Again, in the *Three Ladies of London*, 1584:

"One thumps me on the neck, another strikes me on the *nole*." STEEVENS.

222. —minnock—] This is the reading of the old quarto, and I believe right. *Minnekin*, now *minx*, is a nice trifling girl. *Minnock* is apparently a word of contempt. JOHNSON.

The folio reads *mimmick*; perhaps for *mimick*, a word more familiar than that exhibited by one of the quartos, for the other reads, *minnick*. STEEVENS.

I believe the reading of the folio is right:

And forth my *mimick* comes.

The line has been explained as if it related to *Thisbe*, but it does not relate to her, but to *Pyramus*. *Bottom* had just been playing that part, and had retired into the brake. "Anon his *Thisbe* must be answered, *And forth my mimick (i. e. my actor) comes.*" In this there seems no difficulty.

Mimick is used as synonymous to *actor*, by Decker, in his *Guls's Hornebooke*, 1609: "Draw what troope you can from the stage after you: the *mimicks* are beholden to you for allowing them elbow-room." Again, in his *Satiromastix*, 1602: "Thou [B. Jonson] hast forgot how thou amblest in a leather pilch by a play-waggon in the highway, and took'st mad *Jeronymo's* part, to get service amongst the *mimicks.*"

MALONE.

224. ————sort,] Company. So above:

"———that barren sort;"

and in Waller:

"*A sort of lusty shepherds strive.*"

JOHNSON.

So, in Chapman's *May-day*, 1611:

"—though

"—though we never lead any other company than a sort of quart pots." STEEVENS.

228. *And, at our stamp,—*] This seems to be a vicious reading. Fairies are never represented stamping, or of a size that should give force to a stamp; nor could they have distinguished the stamps of Puck from those of their own companions. I read :

And at a stump here o'er and o'er one falls.

So Drayton :

" *A pain he in his head-piece feels,*

" *Against a stubbed tree he reels,*

" *And up went poor hobgoblin's heels ;*

" *Alas, his brain is dizzy.——*

" *At length upon his feet he gets,*

" *Hobgoblin fumes, Hobgoblin frets,*

" *And as again he forward sets,*

" *And through the bushes scrambles,*

" *A stump doth trip him in his pace,*

" *Down fell poor Hob upon his face,*

" *And lamentably tore his case,*

" *Among the briers and brambles."* JOHNSON.

I adhere to the old reading. The *stamp* of a fairy might be efficacious though not loud; neither is it necessary to suppose, when supernatural beings are spoken of, that the size of the agent determines the force of the action. That fairies *stamped* to some purpose, may be known from the following passage in *Olaus Magnus de Gentibus Septentrionalibus*.—" *Vero saltem adeo profundè in terram impresserant, ut locus insigni*

insigni ardore orbiculariter peresus, non parit arenti redivivum cespite gramen." Shakspeare's own authority, however, is most decisive. See the conclusion of the first scene of the fourth act:

"Come, my queen, take hand with me,

"And *rock* the ground whereon these sleepers
be." STEEVENS.

Honest Reginald Scott, says "Our grandams maides were wont to set a boll of milke before Incubus and his cousine Robin Goodfellow, for grinding of malt or mustard, and sweeping the house at midnight: and—that he would chafe exceedingly, if the maid or good wife of the house, having compassion of his nakedness, laid aside clothes for him, besides his messe of white bread and milk, which was his standing fee. For in that case he saith; What have we here? Hemton, hamten, here will I never more tread nor *stampen*." *Discoverie of Witchcraft*, 1584, p. 85. REMARKS.

233. *Some, sleeves; some, hats:—*] There is the like image in Drayton of queen Mab and her fairies flying from Hobgoblin:

"Some tore a ruff, and some a gown,

"'Gainst one another justling;

"They flew about like chaff i'th' wind,

"For haste some left their masks behind,

"Some could not stay their gloves to find,

"There never was such bustling." JOHNSON.

239. *—latch'd—*] Or letch'd, lick'd over, lecher, to lick, French. HANMER.

In

In the North, it signifies to *infect*. STEEVENS.

251. *Being o'er shoes in blood,—*] An allusion to the proverb, *Over shoes, over boots*. JOHNSON.

258. —noon-tide *with the Antipodes*.] So, in *The Death of Robert Earl of Huntingdon*, 1601:

“And dwell one month *with the Antipodes*.”

Again, in *K. Richard II*.

“While we were wand’ring *with the Antipodes*.”

STEEVENS.

260. —*so dead,—*] So, in the Second Part of *Henry IV*. act i. sc. 3.

“Even such a man, so faint, so spiritless,

“So dull, so dead, in look, so woe-begone.”

STEEVENS.

273. —*O brave touch!*] *Touch* in Shakspeare’s time was the same with our *exploit*, or rather *stroke*. A brave touch, a noble stroke, *un grand coup*. “Mason was very merry, pleasantly playing both the shrewd touches of many curst boys, and the small discretion of many lewd school-masters.” Ascham. JOHNSON.

A *touch* anciently signified a *trick*. In the old black letter story of *Howleglas*, it is always used in that sense: “—for at all times he did some mad *touch*.”

STEEVENS.

277. —*mispris’d—*] Mistaken; so below *misprision* is mistake. JOHNSON.

283. *And from thy hated presence part I so:]* So has been supplied by some of the modern editors.

MALONE.

288. *For debt that bankrupt sleep—*] The first and second

second folio read—*slip*. The same error has, perhaps, happened in *Measure for Measure* :

“Which for these nineteen years we have let
slip.” MALONE.

306. *Hit with Cupid's archery,*] This alludes to what was said before :

———*the bolt of Cupid fell,
It fell upon a little western flower
Before milk-white, now purple with love's wound.*

STEEVENS.

344. —*Taurus' snow,*] *Taurus* is the name of a range of mountains in Asia. JOHNSON.

347. *This princess of pure white,—*] Thus all the editions to Sir T. H.'s. He reads :

This pureness of pure white ;

and Dr. Warburton follows him. The old reading may be justified from a passage in Sir Walter Raleigh's *Discovery of Guiana*, where the pine-apple is called *The princess of Fruits*. Again, in *Wyatt's Poems*, “Of beauty *princesse* chief.” STEEVENS.

In the *Winter's Tale* we meet with a similar expression :

“———good sooth, she is

“The *Queen of curds and cream*.” MALONE.

———*seal of bliss!*] He has in *Measure for Measure*, the same image :

“But my kisses bring again,

“Seals of love, but seal'd in vain.” JOHNSON.

353. —*join, in souls,—*] *i. e.* join heartily, unite in the same mind.

Shakspeare in *Henry V.* uses an expression not unlike this :

“ *For we will hear, note, and believe in heart;*”

i. e. heartily believe: and in *Measure for Measure*, he talks of electing with *special soul*. In *Troilus and Cressida*, Ulysses, relating the character of Hector as given him by Æneas, says :

“ ———— with *private soul*

“ Did in great Ilion thus translate him to me.”

And, in *All Fools*, by Chapman, 1605, is the same expression as that for which I contend :

“ Happy, *in soul*, only by winning her.”

Again, in a Masque called *Luminalia*, or *The Festival of Light*, 1637 :

“ You that are chief *in souls*, as in your blood.”

Again, in *Pierce Pennyless his Supplication to the Devil*, 1595 :

“ ———— whose subversion *in soul* they have vow'd.”

Again, in Warner's *Albion's England*, 1602. B. XII. ch. 75.

“ Could all, *in soul*, of very God say as an Ethnick said

“ To one that preached Hercules ?” —

Sir T. Hanmer would read—*in flouts* ; Dr. Warburton *insolents*.

STEEVENS.

I rather believe the line should be read thus :

But you must join, ILL souls, to mock me too ?

Ill is often used for *bad*, *wicked*. So, in the *Sea Voyage* of Beaumont and Fletcher, act iv. sc. 1.

“ They did begin to quarrel like *ill* men ;

G

which

which I cite the rather, because *ill* had there also been changed into *in*, by an error of the press, which Mr. Simpson has corrected from the edition 1647.

TYRWHITT.

This is a very reasonable conjecture, though I think it hardly right.

JOHNSON.

We meet with this phrase in an old poem by Robert Dabourne :

“ —Men shift their fashions—

“ They are *in souls* the same.”

FARMER.

360. *A trim exploit, a manly enterprize, &c.*] This is written much in the manner and spirit of Juno's reproach to Venus in the 4th book of the *Æneid* :

“ Egregiam verò laudem et spolia ampla refertis,

“ Tuque puerque tuus; magnum et memorabile nomen,

“ Una dolo divûm si fœmina victa duorum est.”

STEEVENS.

363. —Extort

A poor soul's patience,—] Harass, torment.

JOHNSON.

374. *My heart to her—*] We should read :

My heart with her but as guest-wise sojourn'd.

So, Prior :

“ No matter what beauties I saw in my way,

“ They were but my visits, but thou art my home.”

JOHNSON.

So, in our author's 109th Sonnet :

“ This

"This is my *home* of love; if I have rang'd,

"Like him that travels, I *return* again."

MALONE.

379. *Lest, to thy peril, thou aby it dear.*] The folio has *abide*.

MALONE.

386. —thy *sound*.] Fol.—*that* sound. MALONE.

392. —*all yon fiery O's*—] Shakspeare uses O for a circle. So, in the prologue to *Henry V.*

"——can we crowd

"Within this little *O*, the very casques

"That did affright the air at Agincourt!"

Again, in the *Partheneia Sacra*, 1633:

"—the purple canopy of the earth, powder'd over and beset with silver *o'es*, or rather an azure vault," &c.

STEEVENS.

D'Ewes's *Journal of Queen Elizabeth's Parliament*, p. 650, mentions a patent to make spangles and *o'es* of gold; and I think haberdashers call small curtain rings, *O's*, as being circular.

TOLLET.

This *little O* in the passage from *Henry V.* refers, I apprehend, to the orbicular form of the globe theatre.

HENLEY.

398. —*in spight of me.*] I read, *in spite to me.*

JOHNSON.

407. —*artificial gods,*] *Artificial* is ingenious, artificial.

STEEVENS.

408. *Have with our neelds, &c.*] *Neelds* for *needles*, a common contraction in the inland counties at this day. See Gammer Gurton's *Needle*.

G ij

Again,

Again, in Sir Arthur Gorges's translation of Lucan, 1614 :

" Thus Cato spake, whose feeling words

" Like pricking *neelds*, or points of swords," &c.

Again, in *Pericles Prince of Tyre*, 1609 :

" Deep clerks she dumbs, and with her *neeld* composes

" Nature's own shape."

Again, in Stanyhurst's *Virgil*, 1582 :

" —On *neeld*-wrought carpets."

The same ideas occur in *Pericles Prince of Tyre*, 1609 :

" ————she

" Would ever with Marina be :

" Be't when they weav'd the sleded silk,

" With fingers long, small, white as milk,

" Or when she would with sharp *neeld* wound

" The cambrick," &c.

In the age of Shakspeare many contractions were used. Ben Jonson has *wher* for *whether* in the prologue to his *Sad Shepherd* ; and in the earl of Sterline's *Darius* is *sport* for *support*, and *twards* for *towards*.

STEEVENS.

441. *Ay, do, persever,—*] *Persever* is the reading of all the old copies. The word was formerly so pronounced. Thus our author in *All's Well that End's Well*, act iv.

" ————say thou art mine, and ever

" My love, as it begins, so shall *persever*."

So, in Glapthorne's *Argalus and Parthenia*, 1639 :

" — for

"———for ever

"May they in love and union still *persever*."

STEEVENS.

446. —*such an argument.*] Such a *subject* of light merriment.

JOHNSON.

So, in the first part of *King Henry IV.* act ii.

"—it would be *argument* for a week," &c.

STEEVENS.

455. —*than her weak prayers.*] The old copies read :

———*than her weak praise.*

STEEVENS.

A modern editor very plausibly reads—*than her weak prays*. The using the verb as a substantive is much in our author's manner ; and the transcriber's ear might have deceived him here as in many other places.

MALONE.

492. —*you canker-blossom !*] The *canker-blossom* is not in this place the blossom of the *canker* or *wild rose*, which our author alludes to in *Much Ado About Nothing*, act i.

"I had rather be a *canker* in a hedge

"Than a rose in his grace ;"

but a worm that preys on the leaves or buds of flowers, always beginning in the middle. So, in this play, act ii.

"Some to kill *cankers* in the musk-rose buds."

STEEVENS.

529. "———*how fond I am.*] *Fond*, i. e. foolish.

STEEVENS.

543. *You minimus*,—] Shakspeare might have given it :

G iij

"ou

“ You Minim, you”——

i. e. You *Diminutive* of the creation, you *reptile*, as in Milton.

THEOBALD.

543. ——of *hind’ring knot-grass made*;] It appears that *knot-grass* was anciently supposed to prevent the growth of any animal or child.

Beaumont and Fletcher mention this property of it in *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* :

“ Should they put him into a straight pair of gaskins, ’twere worse than *knot-grass*, he would never grow after it.”

Again, in *The Coxcomb* :

“ We want a boy extremely for this function, kept under, for a year, with milk and *knot-grass*.” Daisy-roots were supposed to have had the same effect.

That prince of verbose and pedantick coxcombs, Richard Tomlinson, apothecary, in his translation of *Renodæus his Dispensatory*, 1657, informs us that *knot-grass* “ is a low reptant hearb, with exile, copious, nodose, and geniculated branches.” Perhaps no hypochondriack is to be found who might not derive his cure from the perusal of any single chapter in this work.

STEEVENS.

550. *Thou shalt aby it*.] To *aby* is to pay dear for, to suffer. So, in the *Downfall of Robert Earl of Huntingdon*, 1601 :

“ Had I sword and buckler here,

“ You should *aby* these questions.”

The word has occurred before in this play.

Again, in *The Pinner of Wakefield*, 1599 :

"—but thou shalt dear *aby* this blow."

STEEVENS.

The folio reads,——*abide it.*

MALONE.

561. *I am amaz'd, and know not what to say.*] This line is not in the folio.

MALONE.

563. ——*thy knaveries willingly.*] The quarto in 1600 reads *wilfully.*

STEEVENS.

569. ——*so sort,*] So happen in the issue.

JOHNSON.

So, in *Monsieur D'Olive*, 1606:

"—never look to have any action *sort* to your honour."

STEEVENS.

584. ——*virtuous property,*] Salutiferous. So he calls, in the *Tempest*, *poisonous dew*, *wicked dew*.

JOHNSON.

599. ——*damned spirits all,*

That in cross-ways and floods have burial,]

i. e. The ghosts of self-murderers, who are buried in cross-roads; and of those who being drowned, were condemned (according to the opinion of the ancients) to wander for a hundred years, as the rites of sepulture had never been regularly bestowed on their bodies. That the waters were sometimes the place of residence for *damned spirits*, we learn from the ancient bl. let. Romance of *Syr Eglamoure of Artoys*, no date:

"Let some preest a gospel saye

"For doute of *fendes in the flode.*" STEEVENS.

The laying of ghosts in the *red-sea* is a circumstance sufficiently notorious. An account of the origin of these

these notions may be seen in a note on the bishop of London's Lectures on the Hebrew Poetry, translated by Mr. Gregory. HENLEY.

606. *I with the morning's love have oft made sport ;*] Thus all the old copies, and I think, rightly. Tithonus was the husband of Aurora, and Tithonus was no young deity. So, in *The Fawne*, by J. Marston, 1606 :

" *Aurora* yet keeps chaste *old Tithon's* bed ;

" Yet blushes at it when she rises."

Again, in *Aurora*, a collection of sonnets, by lord Sterline, 1604 :

" And why should *Tithon* thus, whose day grows late,

" Enjoy *the morning's love* ?"

Again, in Spenser's *Faery Queen*, B. III. c. 3.

" As faire *Aurora* rising hastily,

" Doth by her blushing tell that she did lye

" All night in *old Tithonus' frozen* bed."

Again, in the *Faithful Shepherdess* of Beaumont and Fletcher :

" ————O, lend me all thy red,

" Thou shame-fac'd morning, when from *Tithon's* bed

" Thou risest *ever-maiden* !"

How such a waggish spirit as the King of the Fairies might make sport with an antiquated lover, or his mistress in his absence, may be easily understood. Dr. Johnson reads with all the modern editors, " I with the *morning light*," &c.

STEEVENS.

641. *Ho, ho, ho! coward, why comest thou not?*] It may be remarked that this exclamation is peculiar to *Puck*. In the old Song printed by Peck, in which he relates all his gambols, he concludes every verse with *Ho, ho, ho!* He here forgets his assumed character.

REMARKS.

647. — *buy this dear,*] i. e. *thou shalt dearly pay for this.* Though this is sense, and may well enough stand, yet the poet perhaps wrote *thou shalt 'by it dear.* So, in another place, *thou shalt aby it.* So, Milton,
 “ *How dearly I abide that boast so vain.*”

JOHNSON.

674. *When thou wak'st,*

Thou tak'st, &c.] The second line would be improved I think, both in its measure and construction, if it were written thus: *When thou wak'st, See thou tak'st, True delight, &c.*

TYRWHITT.

682. *Jack shall have Jill, &c.*] These three last lines are to be found among *Heywood's Epigrams on three hundred Proverbs.*

STEEVENS.

ACT IV.

Line 1. I SEE no reason why the fourth act should begin here, when there seems no interruption of the action. In the old quartos of 1600, there is no division of acts, which seems to have been afterwards arbitrarily made in the first folio, and may therefore be altered at pleasure.

JOHNSON.

2. —do coy,] To coy is to sooth, to stroke. So, in the *Arraignment of Paris*, 1584 :

“Plays with Amyntas’ lusty boy, and coys him in the dales.”

Again, in Warner’s *Albion’s England*, 1602. B. VI. ch. 30.

“And whilst she coys his sooty cheeks, or curls his sweaty top.”

Again, in Sir A. Gorges’s translation of Lucan, B. IX.

“——his sports to prove,

“Coying that pow’rful queen of love.”

STEEVENS.

19. —neif,——] *i. e.* fist. *Henry IV.* act ii.

“Sweet night, I kiss thy neif.” GREY.

22. —cavalero Cobweb——] Without doubt it should be cavalero *Pease-blossom*; as for cavalero *Cobweb*, he had just been dispatched upon a perilous adventure.

GREY.

30. —the tongs——] The old rustick musick of the *tongs and key*. The folio has this stage direction. —“*Musicke, Tongs, Rurall Musicke.*” STEEVENS.

42. In the former editions—and be always away.] What! was she giving her attendants an everlasting dismissal? No such thing; they were to be still upon duty. I am convinced the poet meant;

——and be all ways away.

i. e. disperse yourselves, and scout out severally, in your *watch*, that danger approach us from no quarter.

THEOBALD.

Mr.

Mr. Upton reads :

And be away—away.

JOHNSON.

Mr. Heath would read :—and be *always i' th' way*.

STEEVENS.

44. ———*the female ivy*——] Shakspeare calls it *female ivy*, because it always requires some support, which is poetically called its husband. So Milton :

“ ———led the vine

“ To wed *her* elm : she *spous'd* about him twines

“ Her *marriageable* arms” ———

“ *Ulmo conjuncta marito.*” Catull.

“ *Platanusque cælebs*

“ *Evincet ulmos.* Hor.

STEEVENS.

———*the female ivy* so

Enrings the barky *fingers* of the elm.] Though the *ivy* here represents the *female*, there is, notwithstanding, an evident reference in the words *enrings* and *fingers* to the *ring* of the *marriage rite*.

HENLEY.

50. —*sweet savours*——] The first edition reads *favours*.

STEEVENS.

91. *Dance in duke Theseus' house triumphantly,*

And bless it to all FAIR posterity.] We should read :

———*to all FAR posterity.*

i. e. to the remotest posterity.

WARBURTON.

97. *Then, my queen, in silence sad,*

Trip we after the night's shade :] Mr. Theobald says, *why sad ? Fairies are pleased to follow night.* He will have it *fade* ; and so, to mend the rhyme, spoils both

both the sense and grammar. But he mistakes the meaning of *sad*; it signifies only grave, sober; and is opposed to their dances and revels, which were now ended at the singing of the morning lark. —So *Winter's Tale*, act iv. —“*My father and the gentlemen are in SAD talk.*” For *grave* or *serious*.

WARBURTON.

106. —our observation is perform'd:] The honours due to the morning of *May*. I know not why Shakspeare calls this play a *Midsummer Night's Dream*, when he so carefully informs us that it happened on the night preceding *May-day*.

JOHNSON.

The title of this play seems no more intended to denote the precise *time of the action*, than that of the *Winter's Tale*; which we find, was at the season of sheep-shearing.

FARMER.

109. *Uncouple in the western valley; go:]* The folio reads:

Uncouple in the western valley *let them go*.

Shakspeare might have written:

Uncoupled in the western valley let them go.

MALONE.

115. ———they bay'd the bear] Thus all the old copies. And thus in Chaucer's *Knight's Tale*, v. 2020. late edit:

“The hunte ystrangled with the wild beres.”

Bearbaiting was likewise once a diversion esteemed proper for royal personages, even of the softer sex. While the princess Elizabeth remained at Hatfield-House, under the custody of Sir Thomas Pope, she was

was visited by queen Mary. The next morning they were entertained with a grand exhibition of *bear-baiting*, with which their highnesses were right well content. See Life of Sir Thomas Pope, cited by Warton in his History of English Poetry, Vol. II. p. 391.

STEEVENS.

Holinshed, with whose histories our poet was well acquainted, says "the *beare* is a beast commonlie hunted in the East countries." See Vol. I. p. 206; and in p. 226, he says, "Alexander at vacant times hunted the tiger, the pard, the bore, and the *beare*." Pliny, Plutarch, &c. mention bear-hunting. Turberville, in his *Book of Hunting*, has two chapters on hunting the *bear*. As the persons mentioned by the poet are foreigners of the heroick strain, he might perhaps think it nobler sport for them to hunt the *bear* than the *boar*. Shakspeare must have read the *Knight's Tale* in Chaucer, where are mentioned Theseus's "white alandes [grey-hounds] to huntin "at the lyon, or the wild *bere*." TOLLET.

117. *Such gallant chiding*;—] *Chiding*, in this instance, means only *sound*. So, in *Henry VIII*.

"As doth a rock against the *chiding* flood."

Again, in *Humour out of Breath*, a comedy, by John Day, 1608:

"——I take great pride

"To hear soft musick, and thy shrill voice *chide*."

Again, in the 22d chapter of Drayton's *Polyolbion*:

"—drums and trumpets *chide*."— STEEVENS.

121. *My hounds are bred, &c.*] This passage has been imitated by Lee in his *Theodosius*:

“Then through the woods we chac’d the foaming
boar,

“With hounds that open’d like Thessalian bulls,

“Like tygers flew’d, and sanded as the shore,

“With ears and chests that dash’d the morning
dew.”

MALONE.

122. *So flew’d,——*] Sir T. Hanmer justly remarks, that *flews* are the large chaps of a deep-mouth’d hound. Sir Arthur Golding uses this word in his translation of *Ovid’s Metamorphoses*, finished 1567, a book with which Shakspeare appears to have been well acquainted. The poet is describing Actæon’s hounds, B. III. p. 33. b. 1603. Two of them, like our author’s, were of Spartan kind, bred from a Spartan bitch and a Cretan dog:

“—with other twaine, that had a sire of Crete,

“And dam of Spart: th’ one of them called
Jollyboy, a grete

“And *large-flew’d* hound.”

Shakspeare mentions Cretan hounds (with Spartan) afterwards in this speech of Theseus. And Ovid’s translator, Golding, in the same description, has them both in one verse, *ibid.* p. 33. a.

“This latter was a hound of Crete, the other
was of a Spart.”

WARTON.

122. *——so sanded,——*] *Sandy’d* means of a sandy colour, which is one of the true denotements of a blood-hound.

STEEVENS.

141. ——— *Saint Valentine is past;*] Alluding to the old saying, that birds begin to couple on St. Valentine's day. STEEVENS.

166. *Fair Helena in fancy following me.*] *Fancy* is here taken for *love* or *affection*, and is opposed to *fury* as before:

Sighs and tears poor Fancy's followers.

Some now call that which a man takes particular delight in, his *fancy*. *Flower-fancier*, for a florist, and *bird-fancier*, for a lover and feeder of birds, are colloquial words. JOHNSON.

So, in *Hymen's Triumph*, a Masque, by Daniel, 1628:

“ With all persuasions sought to win her mind

“ To *fancy* him.”

Again:

“ Do not enforce me to accept a man

“ I cannot *fancy*.”

STEEVENS.

169. ——— *is* ———] Omitted in the early edition.

MALONE.

170. ——— *an idle gawd,*] See before, act i. line 34. STEEVENS.

195. *And I have found Demetrius like a JEWEL,*

Mine own, and not mine own.] *Helena*, I think, means to say, that having found *Demetrius unexpectedly*, she considered her property in him as insecure as that which a person has in a *jewel* that he has found by *accident*, which he knows not whether he shall retain, and which therefore may properly enough be called *his own, and not his own*.

Hij

Helena

Helena does not say, as Dr. Warburton represented, that Demetrius *was like a jewel*, but that she had *found him*, like a jewel, &c.

A kindred thought occurs in *Antony and Cleopatra*:

“——by starts

“His fretted fortunes give him hope and fear

“*Of what he has, and has not.*”

The same kind of expression is found also in *The Merchant of Venice*:

“Where ev’ry something, being blent together,

“Turns to a wild of nothing, save of joy,

“*Exprest, and not exprest.*”

MALONE.

See also the REVISAL, p. 57.

197. *Are you sure,*

That we are awake?——] This passage, hitherto omitted, I have restored from the quarto, 1600.

STEEVENS.

215. ——*man is but a patch’d fool,*] The quarto, 1600, gives the passage thus: “But man is but *patch’d a fool,*” &c.

STEEVENS.

224. ——*at her death.*] He means *the death of Thisbe*, which is what his head is at present full of.

STEEVENS.

238. ——*a thing of nought.*] ‘So, in *Hamlet*:

“*Ham.* The king is a *thing*——

“*Guil.* A *thing* my lord?

“*Ham.* Of *nothing.*”

See the note on this passage.

STEEVENS.

242. *made men.*] In the same sense as in the *Tempest*, *any monster in England makes a man.*

JOHNSON.

247. —*sixpence a day in Pyramus or nothing.*] Shakspeare has already ridiculed the title-page of *Cambyzes* by Thomas Preston; and here he seems to aim a personal stroke at him. *Preston* acted a part in John Ritwise's play of *Dido*, before queen Elizabeth at Cambridge, in 1564; and the queen was so well pleased, that she bestowed on him a pension of twenty pounds a year, which is little more than a shilling a day. Our poet, in the first part of *Henry IV.* has made Falstaff declare, that when he presented the prince's father, he would do it

“*In King Cambyzes' vein.*”

STEEVENS.

ACT V.

Line 2. **T**H E S E beautiful lines are in all the old editions thrown out of metre. They are very well restored by the later editors.

JOHNSON.

8. *Are of imagination all compact:*] i. e. made up of mere imagination. So, in *As You Like It*:

“If he, *compact* of jars, grow musical.”

STEEVENS.

10. *That is the madman: the lover, all as frantick,*] Such is the reading of all the old copies; instead of which, the modern editors have given us:

“The madman: while the lover all as frantick.”

STEEVENS.

12. ———in a fine frenzy rolling,] This seems to have been imitated by Drayton in his *Epistle to J. Reynolds on Poets and Poetry*: describing Marlowe, he says:

“ ———that *fine madness* still he did retain,

“ Which rightly should possess a *poet's* brain!”

MALONE.

The powers of imagination were never more philosophically or poetically expressed than by Shakspeare in this description.—The word *habitation*, in line 17, will illustrate the poet's use of *inhabit* in *Macbeth*, which, in defiance of every thing like sense, has been changed to *inhibit*.

HENLEY.

26. *Constancy*;] Consistency, stability, certainty.

JOHNSON.

39. *Call Philostrate.*] In the folio, 1623, it is, *Call Egeus*, and all the speeches afterwards spoken by *Philostrate*, except, that beginning, “ No, my noble lord,” &c. are there given to that character. But the modern editions, from the quarto 1600, have rightly given them to *Philostrate*, who appears in the first scene as master of the revels to *Theseus*, and is there sent out on a similar kind of errand.

In the *Knight's Tale* of Chaucer, *Arcite*, under the name of *Philostrate*, is 'squire of the chamber to *Theseus*.

STEEVENS.

41. *Say, what abridgment, &c.*] By *abridgment* our author means a dramatick performance, which crowds the events of years into a few hours. So, in

Hamlet,

Hamlet, act ii. he calls the players, "*abridgments, abstracts, and brief chronicles of the time.*"

Again, in *King Henry V.*

"Then brook *abridgment*; and your eyes advance

"After your thoughts—— STEEVENS.

44. ——a brief,——] *i. e.* a short account or enumeration. So, in Gascoigne's *Dulce Bellum Inexpertis* :

"She sent a *brief* unto me by her mayd."

STEEVENS.

44. One of the quartos has *ripe*, the other old editions, *rife*.

JOHNSON.

Rife is a word used both by *Sidney* and *Spenser*. It means abounding, but it is now almost obsolete. Again, in *Stephen Gosson's School of Abuse*, 1579: "——you shall find the theaters of the one, the abuses of the other, to be *rife* among us."

STEEVENS.

46. *The. reads.*] This is printed as *Mr. Theobald* gave it from both the old quartos. In the first folio, and all the following editions, *Lysander* reads the catalogue, and *Theseus* makes the remarks.

JOHNSON.

54. *The thrice three Muses mourning for the death*

Of learning, &c.] I do not know whether it has been before observed, that *Shakspeare* here, perhaps, alluded to *Spenser's* poem, entitled *The Tears of the Muses*, on the neglect and contempt of learning. This piece first appeared in quarto, with others, 1591. The oldest edition of this play now known is dated 1600. If *Spenser's* poem be here intended,

tended, may we not presume that there is some earlier edition of this? But however, if the allusion be allowed, at least it seems to bring the play below 1591. WARTON.

This pretended title of a dramattick performance might be designed as a covert stroke of satire on those who had permitted Spenser to die through absolute want of bread in the year 1598:—*late* deceas'd in beggary—seems to refer to this circumstance.

STEEVENS.

56. —*keen, and critical*] *Critical* here means criticizing, censuring.

So, in *Othello*:

“*O, I am nothing if not critical.*” STEEVENS.

60. *Merry and tragical?*—] Our poet is still harping on *Cambyses*.

STEEVENS.

76. —————*unbreath'd memories*] That is, unexercised, unpractised memories.

STEEVENS.

82. *Unless you can find sport in their intents,*] Thus all the copies. But as I know not what it is to *stretch* and *con* an *intent*, I suspect a line to be lost.

JOHNSON.

To *intend* and to *attend* were anciently synonymous. Of this use several instances are given in a note on the third scene of the first act of *Othello*. *Intents* therefore may be put for the object of their *attention*. We still say a person is *intent* on his business.

STEEVENS.

86. —*never any thing can be amiss,*
When simpleness and duty attend it.] Ben Jon-
 son,

son, in *Cynthia's Revels*, has employed this sentiment of humanity on the same occasion when Cynthia is preparing to see a masque :

" Nothing which duty and desire to please,
" Bears written on the forehead comes amiss."

STEEVENS.

94. *Our sport shall be, &c.*] Voltaire says something like this of Louis XIV. who took a pleasure in seeing his courtiers in confusion when they spoke to him.

STEEVENS.

95. *And what poor duty cannot do,*

Noble respect takes it in might, not merit.] In might, is perhaps an elliptical expression for *what might have been*.

STEEVENS.

97. *Where I have come, great clerks, have purposed, &c.*] So, in *Pericles* :

" She sings like one immortal, and she dances

" As goddess like to her admired lays;

" Deep clerks she dumbs."

It should be observed, *periods* in the text is used in the sense of *full stops*.

MALONE.

110. ————*address.*] That is, ready. So, in *King Henry V.*

" To-morrow for our march we are *address.*"

STEEVENS.

111. [*Flourish of trumpets.*] It appears from the *Gull's Hornbook*, by Decker, 1609, that the prologue was anciently usher'd in by trumpets: " Present not yourselfe on the stage (especially at a new play) untill the quaking prologue hath (by rubbing) got cullor

cullor into his cheekes, and is ready to give the *trumpets* their cue that hees upon point to enter."

STEEVENS.

127. —on a recorder;—] Lord Bacon in his natural history, cent. iii. sect. 221, speaks of *recorders* and flutes at the same instant, and says, that the *recorder* hath a less bore, and a greater, above and below; and elsewhere, cent. ii. sect. 187, he speaks of it as having six holes, in which respect it answers to the *Tibia minor* or *Flajolet* of Mersennus. From all which particulars, it should seem that the flute and the *recorder* were different instruments, and that the latter, in propriety of speech, was no other than the *flajolet*. *Hawkins's History of Musick*, Vol. IV. p. 479.

REED.

Shakspeare introduces it in *Hamlet*; and *Milton* says:

"To the sound of soft *recorders*."

This instrument is mentioned in many of the old plays.

STEEVENS.

—but not in government.] That is, not regularly, according to the tune.

STEEVENS.

131. In this place the folio, 1623, exhibits the following prompter's direction. *Tawyer with a trumpet before them.*

STEEVENS.

142. *To meet at Ninus' tomb, &c.*] So, in Chaucer's *Legend of Thisbe of Babylon*:

"Thei settin markes their metingis should be,

"There king *Ninus* was graven undir a tre."

Again:

"And as she ran her *wimple* she let fall," &c.

STEEVENS.

146. ———her mantle she did fall;] Thus all the old copies. The modern editions read :—"she let fall," unnecessarily. *To fall* in this instance is a verb active, and occurs in *The Tempest*, &c.

STEEVENS.

150. *Whereat, with blade, with bloody blameful blade,*] Mr. Upton rightly observes, that Shakspeare in this line ridicules the affectation of beginning many words with the same letter. He might have remarked the same of

*The raging rocks
And shivering shocks.*

Gascoigne, contemporary with our poet, remarks and blames the same affectation.

JOHNSON.

This alliteration seems to have reached the height of its fashion in the reign of king Henry VIII. The following stanza is quoted from a poem *On the Fall and evil Success of Rebellion*, written in 1537, by Wilfride Holme.

" Loe, leprous lurdeins, lubricke in loquacitie,
" Vah, vaporous villeins, with venim vulnerate,
" Proh, prating parenticides, plexious to pin-
 nositie,
" Fie, frantike, fabulators, furibund, and fatuate,
" Out, oblatrant, obliet, obstacle, and obsecate.
" Ah addiet algoes, in acerbitie acclamant,
" Magnall, in mischief, malicious to mugilate,
" Repriving your Roy so renowned and radiant."

In *Tusser's Husbandry*, p. 104, there is a poem of which every word begins with a T; and the old play entitled,

The

The Historie of the Two valiant Knights, Syr Clyomon Knight of the Golden Sheeld, Sonne to the King of Denmark; and Clamydes the White Knight, Son to the King of Suavia, 1599, is another remarkable instance of alliteration:

“Bringing my barke to Denmarke here, to bide
the bitter broyle

“And beating blowes of billows high,” &c.

STEEVENS.

170. *It is the wittiest partition that ever I heard discourse, my lord.*] Demetrius is represented as a punster: I believe the passage should be read: This is the wittiest *partition*, that ever I heard *in discourse*. Alluding to the many stupid *partitions* in the argumentative writings of the time. Shakspeare himself, as well as his contemporaries, uses *discourse* for *reasoning*: and he here avails himself of the double sense; as he had done before in the word, *partition*.

FARMER.

177. *And thou, O wall, O sweet,——*] The first folio reads:

And thou, O wall, *thou* sweet. MALONE.

183. *O wicked wall, &c.*] So, in Chaucer's *Legend of Thisbe*:

“Thus would thei saine, alas! *thou wicked wal,*”
&c.

STEEVENS.

194. *——knit up in thee.*] Thus the folio. The quarto reads: *knit now again*.

STEEVENS.

200. *And like Limander, &c.*] Limander and Helen, are spoken by the blundering player, for Leander and Hero. Shafalus and Procrus, for Cephalus and Procris.

JOHNSON.

On

On the books of the Stationers-Company, October 22, 1593, is enter'd, "A booke entitled, *Procris & Cephalus*, divided into four parts." It has been already observed, that *book* was once the technical term for *play*. Shakspeare therefore might design to ridicule Chute's play on this subject. This poor author was the butt of Nash and other literary buffoons of his age.

STEEVENS.

210. *Thes. Now is the mural down between the two neighbours.*

Dem. *No remedy, my lord, when walls are so wilful to hear without warning.*] This alludes to the proverb, "*Walls have ears.*" A wall between almost any two neighbours would soon be down, were it to exercise this faculty without previous warning.

FARMER.

The old copies read *moral*, instead of *mural*. Mr. Pope made the change.

MALONE.

220. *Here come two noble beasts in, a man and a lion.*] I don't think the jest here is either complete, or right. It is differently pointed in several of the old copies, which, I suspect, may lead us to the true reading, viz.

Here come two noble beasts—in a man and a lion.

Immediately upon Theseus saying this, Enter Lion and Moonshine. It seems very probable therefore, that our author wrote,

—*in a moon and a lion.*

the one having a crescent and a lanthorn before him, and representing the *man* in the *moon*; the other in a lion's hide.

THEOBALD.

Here come two noble beasts in, a moon and a lion. I cannot help supposing that we should have it, a *moon-calf*. The old copies read a *man*: possibly *man* was the marginal interpretation of *moon-calf*; and being more intelligible, got into the text.

The *man in the moon* was no new character on the stage, and is here introduced in ridicule of such exhibitions. Ben Jonson, in one of his masques, called *News from the New World in the Moon*, makes his *Factor* doubt of the person who brings the intelligence. "I must see his dog at his girdle, and the bush of thorns at his back, ere I believe it."—"Those," replies one of the heralds, "are *stale ensigns o' the stage*."

FARMER.

I believe our author wrote

Here come two noble beasts; *e'en*, &c.

So, in *As You Like It*: "Here comes a pair of very strange beasts," &c. not—"here comes in——." See my note on *All's Well that Ends Well*, act i. "You are shallow, Madam, in great friends." MALONE.

226. *Then know, that I, one Snug the joiner, am]* Thus the folio, 1623, which likewise reads *a lion fell*. This not agreeing with the remainder of the speech, the modern editors have altered it into *no lion fell*. Had they consulted the quarto, 1600, it would have set them right:

"Then know that I, *as* Snug the joyner, am

"A lion fell, nor else no lyons dam." STEEVENS.

252. —*in snuff*.] An equivocation. *Snuff* signifies both the cinder of a candle, and hasty anger.

JOHNSON.

271. *Well mous'd, lion*] So, in an ancient bl. let. ballad on this story, entitled, *The Constancy of true Love, &c.*

“And having *musled* thus the same

“Thither he went whence first he came.”

Theseus means that he has well tumbled and bloody'd the veil of Thisbe.

STEEVENS.

276. ——— *glittering streams.*] The old copies read *beams.*

STEEVENS.

The emendation by the Editor of the second folio.

MALONE.

288. *Cut thread and thrum* ;] *Thrum* is the end or extremity of a weaver's warp ; it is popularly used for very coarse yarn. The maids now call a mop of yarn a *thrum mop.*

WARNER.

So, in *Hannibal and Scipio*, 1637:

“———no rough pelt of *thrums*,

“To fight with weather.”

Again, in Chapman's translation of the 16th Iliad :

“And tapestries all golden fring'd, and curl'd with *thrums* behind.”

So in Howell's Letter to Sir Paul Neale, *knt.*

“Translations * are like the wrong side of a Turkey

* This idea has been adopted by Howell from *Don Quixote*: “—me parece, que el traducir de una lengua en otra, es como quien mira los tapices flamencos por el revés, que aunque se ven les figuras, son llenas de *hilos* que las escurecen, y no se ven con la lisura y tez de la haz.” *Hilos* however, which Howell has rendered *thrums*, more properly signifies *floss*, *thread's ends*, or *fastenings*.

HENLEY.

carpet,

carpet, which useth to be full of *thrums* and knots, and nothing so even as the right side." STEEVENS.

289. ———and quell!] To *quell* is to murder, to destroy. So, in the 12th pageant of the *Lusus Coventriae*, commonly called the *Corpus Christi Play*. MS. Cott. Vesp. D. viii.

"That he the lawe may here do,

"With stonys her to *quell*." STEEVENS.

314. —and prove an ass.] The character of Theus throughout this play is more exalted in its humanity than its greatness. Though some sensible observations on life, and animated descriptions fall from him, as it is said of Jago, *you shall taste him more as a soldier than as a wit*, which is a distinction he is here striving to deserve, though with little success; as in support of his pretensions he never rises higher than a *pun*, and frequently sinks as low as a *quibble*.

STEEVENS.

321. The first quarto makes this speech a little longer, but not better. JOHNSON.

The passage omitted is,—"He for a man, God warn'd us; she for a woman, God bless us."

STEEVENS.

340. Lay them in gore,] Mr. Theobald and Dr. Warburton instead of *lay*, read *lave*, but have no note to justify their alteration.

STEEVENS.

352. A Bergomask dance,] Sir Thomas Hanmer observes in his *Glossary*, that this is a dance after the manner of the peasants of *Bergomasco*, a country in Italy, belonging to the Venetians. All the buffoons in

in Italy affect to imitate the ridiculous jargon of that people; and from thence it became also a custom to imitate their manner of dancing. STEEVENS.

353. —our company?] At the conclusion of Beaumont and Fletcher's *Beggar's Bush*, there seems to be a sneer at this character of *Bottom*; but I do not very clearly perceive its drift. The beggars have resolved to embark for England, and exercise their profession there. One of them adds :

“ —————we have a course; —”

“ The spirit of *Bottom* is grown bottomless :” This may mean, that either the publick grew indifferent to bad actors, to plays in general, or to characters, the humour of which consisted in blunders.

STEEVENS.

368. —gait—] i. e. *passage, progress.*

STEEVENS.

372. In the old copies : *And the wolf beholds the moon.* As it is the design of these lines to characterize the animals, as they present themselves at the hour of midnight : and as the wolf is not justly characterized by saying he *beholds* the moon, which other beasts of prey, then awake, do : and as the sounds these animals make at that season, seem also intended to be represented, I make no question but the poet wrote :

And the wolf behowls the moon.

For so the wolf is exactly characterized, it being his peculiar property to *howl at the moon.* (*Behowl, as bemoan, beseem, and an hundred others.*)

WARBURTON.

So, in *Marston's Antonio and Mellida*, where the whole passage seems to be copied from this of our author :

"Now barks the wolfe against the full-cheek'd moon,

"Now lyons half-clam'd entrals roar for food,

"Now croaks the toad, and night-crows screech aloud,

"Flutt'ring 'bout casements of departing souls ;

"Now gape the graves, and thro' their yawns let loose

"Imprison'd spirits to revisit earth."

THEOBALD.

The alteration is better than the original reading ; but perhaps the author meant only to say, that the wolf gazes at the moon.

JOHNSON.

I think, now the wolf *behowls* the moon, was the original text. The allusion is frequently met with in the works of our author and his contemporaries.

"'Tis like the howling of Irish wolves against the moon," says he, in his *As You Like It* ; and Massinger, in his *New Way to pay Old Debts*, makes an usurer feel only

"As the moon is moved

"When wolves with hunger pin'd, howl at her brightness."

FARMER.

The word *behold* was in the time of Shakspeare frequently written *beould* (as I suppose it was then pronounced)—which probably occasioned the mistake.

It is observable, that in the passage in *Lodge's Rosalynde*,

Rosalynde, 1592, which Shakspeare seems to have had in his thoughts, when he wrote in *As You Like It*—
 “ ’Tis like the howling of Irish wolves against the moon : ” —the expression is found, that Marston has used instead of *behows*. “ In courting Phebe, thou barkest with the wolves of Syria against the moon.”
 See also Spenser’s *Faery Queen*, B. I. c. v. s. 30.

MALONE.

374. ———*fordone*.] *i. e.* overcome. So, Spenser’s *Faery Queen*, B. I. c. x. s. 33.

“ And many souls in dolours had *foredone*.”

Again, in Jarvis Markham’s *English Arcadia*, 1607 :

“ —fore-wearied with striving, and *fore-done* with the tyrannous rage of her enemy.”

Again, in the ancient metrical Romance of *Sir Bevis of Hampton*, bl. let. no date :

“ But by the other day at none,

“ These two dragons were *fort-done*.”

STEEVENS.

389. *I am sent, with broom, before,*

To sweep the dust behind the door.] Cleanliness is always necessary to invite the residence and the favour of fairies :

“ These make our girls their slutt’ry rue,

“ By pinching them both black and blue,

“ And put a penny in their shoe

“ The house for cleanly sweeping. Drayton.

JOHNSON.

To sweep the dust behind the door is a common expression, and a common practice in large old houses; where

where the doors of halls and galleries are thrown backward, and seldom or never shut. FARMER.

391. *Through this house give glimmering light,*] Milton perhaps had this picture in his thought :

“ *Glowing embers through the room*

“ *Teach light to counterfeit a gloom.*” Il Penseroso.

So Drayton :

“ *Hence shadows seeming idle shapes*

“ *Of little frisking elves and apes,*

“ *To earth do make their wanton 'scapes,*

“ *As hope of pastime hastes them.*”

I think it should be read :

“ *Through this house in glimmering light.*

JOHNSON.

401. *Now until, &c.]* This speech, which both the old quartos give to Oberon, is in the edition of 1623, and in all the following, printed as the song. I have restored it to Oberon, as it apparently contains not the blessing which he intends to bestow on the bed, but his declaration that he will bless it, and his orders to the fairies how to perform the necessary rites. But where then is the song?—I am afraid it is gone after many other things of greater value. The truth is that two songs are lost. The series of the scene is this; after the speech of Puck, Oberon enters, and calls his fairies to a song, which song is apparently wanting in all the copies. Next Titania leads another song, which is indeed lost like the former, though the editors have endeavoured to find it. Then Oberon dismisses his fairies to the dispatch of the ceremonies.

The songs, I suppose, were lost, because they were not inserted in the players' parts, from which the drama was printed. JOHNSON.

412. *Nor mark prodigious,—]* *Prodigious* has here its primitive signification of *portentous*. So, in *King Richard III.*

“If ever he have child, abortive be it,

“*Prodigious*, and untimely brought to light.”

STEEVENS.

416. —*take his gate* ;] *i. e.* take his way, or direct his steps. So, in Spenser's *Faery Queen*, B. I. c. 8.

“And guide his weary *gate* both to and fro.”

Again, in a Scottish *Proverb* :

“A man may speer the *gate* to Rome.”

Again, in the *Mercer's Play*, among the Chester collection of *Whitsun Mysteries* :

“Therefore go not through his cuntrey,

“Nor the *gate* you came to day.”

STEEVENS.

419. Ever shall it *safely* rest,] This is an arbitrary deviation (first introduced by Mr. Pope) from the old copies, which read——*in safety*.

By printing the line thus :

“*E'er* shall it in safety rest,”

any change becomes unnecessary.

MALONE.

424. [*Exeunt King, &c.*] Since the former part of this play was printed off, I have been informed that the originals of Shakspeare's *Oberon* and *Titania*, are to be sought in the ancient French romance of *Huon de Bordeaux*.

STEEVENS.

Mr.

Mr. Steevens's informer has left him short of the fact.—There is no notice of any MS. of *Huon de Bordeaux*, prior to the invention of printing; it may be presumed, therefore, to have been but little, if at all, anterior to that æra. The first edition is without date (a small folio); the second in quarto was printed in 1516. Though *Oberon* plays the most conspicuous part in this romance, he may, nevertheless, be further traced to the *Histories of Ogier of Denmark*, and *Isaiah the sorrowful*; the last of which was compiled (probably, for the entertainment of our Henry I. whilst he kept his court in Normandy) between the years 1110 and 1120, by Rusticien de Puisse, from the British chronicles of S. Graal, &c. HENLEY.

433. —————*unearned luck*] *i. e.* if we have better fortune than we have deserved. STEEVENS.

434. *Now to 'scape the serpent's tongue,*] That is, if we be dismissed without hisses. JOHNSON.

So, in J. Markham's *English Arcadia*, 1607:

"But the nymph, after the custom of distrest tragedians, whose first act is entertained with a *snaky salutation*, &c. STEEVENS.

438. *Give me your hands*——] That is, Clap your hands. Give us your applause. JOHNSON.

439. [*Exit.*] Of this play there are two editions in quarto; one printed for Thomas Fisher, the other for James Roberts, both in 1600. I have used the copy of Roberts, very carefully collated, as it seems, with that of Fisher. Neither of the editions approach
to

to exactness. Fisher is sometimes preferable, but Roberts was followed, though not without some variations, by Heminge and Condell, and they by all the folios that succeeded them.

JOHNSON.

THE END.



Mr. Steevens's informer has left him short of the fact.—There is no notice of any MS. of *Huon de Bordeaux*, prior to the invention of printing; it may be presumed, therefore, to have been but little, if at all, anterior to that æra. The first edition is without date (a small folio); the second in quarto was printed in 1516. Though *Oberon* plays the most conspicuous part in this romance, he may, nevertheless, be further traced to the *Histories of Ogier of Denmark*, and *Isaiah the sorrowful*; the last of which was compiled (probably, for the entertainment of our Henry I. whilst he kept his court in Normandy) between the years 1110 and 1120, by Rusticien de Puisse, from the British chronicles of S. Graal, &c. HENLEY.

433. —————*unearned luck*] *i. e.* if we have better fortune than we have deserved. STEEVENS.

434. *Now to 'scape the serpent's tongue,*] That is, if we be dismissed without hisses. JOHNSON.

So, in J. Markham's *English Arcadia*, 1607:

“But the nymph, after the custom of distrest tragedians, whose first act is entertained with a *snaky salutation*, &c. STEEVENS.

438. *Give me your hands*——] That is, Clap your hands. Give us your applause. JOHNSON.

439. [*Exit.*] Of this play there are two editions in quarto; one printed for Thomas Fisher, the other for James Roberts, both in 1600. I have used the copy of Roberts, very carefully collated, as it seems, with that of Fisher. Neither of the editions approach
to

to exactness. Fisher is sometimes preferable, but Roberts was followed, though not without some variations, by Heminge and Condel, and they by all the folios that succeeded them.

JOHNSON.

THE END.





